

Rod Serling's

AUGUST 1985 \$2.50

THE

# TWILIGHT ZONE

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Magazine

## GAHAN WILSON Battles Lovecraft's Monsters!

Fiction by  
**BRUCE JAY  
FRIEDMAN**



Gahan Wilson

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# Rod Serling's THE TWILIGHT ZONE Magazine

July/August 1985

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Cover art by Gahan Wilson

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# Bye!



Tritten

Friedman

Fawcett

Recently, while leafing through a boys' science fiction adventure published in 1910, entitled *Through Space to Mars* (Chapter 1: Two Chums. Chapter 2: Jack Makes Oxygen), I was struck by something that's probably more typical of sf than of any other genre—the tendency to *quantify*. A spaceship travels to Mars at a hundred miles a second ("That's 8,640,000 miles a day," some wiseass explains); a man standing on the planet's surface weighs exactly fifty-seven pounds; a Martian's head looks like a leprechaun's and is "about three times as large as that of an ordinary man."

All this math isn't necessarily a bad thing; it lends some stories a bit of credibility, and you can pick up stray bits of potentially valuable information ("Slowing 150,000 pounds of Orbiter from 200 miles per hour to a dead stop isn't done without a lot of braking effort," a recent tale from *Analog* informs us). But the practice seems out of place in works of fantasy—which is one reason I'm dubious about the fantasy games that GAHAN WILSON describes so entertainingly in this issue's cover story. Instead of a true sense of wonder, they offer odds and numbers. Take this passage from one of the instruction manuals for Call of Cthulhu: "Fully-grown Cthonian—Tentacles 65%, Crush 80%. Each round, the Cthonian can attack 1D8 times with tentacles. After hitting, a tentacle will hang on and drain 1 STR point worth of blood from its victim each subsequent round. Subtract one from the number of attacking tentacles for each tentacle draining blood. The crush covers an area 8 feet across. It regenerates from damage at the rate of 5 points per round, until slain." This sort of thing tends to reduce Lovecraft's black cosmic vision to the level of a military game, a series of blow-by-blow encounters with a bunch of monsters. What makes Lovecraft so enjoyable is the richness of his New England atmosphere—not the stopping power of a Flying Polyp's windblast

(pretty lethal, it appears, for the first fifteen yards). There seems too little room in these games for the writerly virtues.

And sometimes too little for the writer himself. Another instruction book, *Curse of the Cthonians* [sic], features a thirty-one-page game scenario called "The Curse of Chaugnar Faugn," and only on the twenty-seventh page is there the teeniest, most grudging reference to Frank Belknap Long, the man who actually *invented* this dread Elephant God back in 1931. (Frank's original story is "recommended to those wishing to act as keepers in this scenario, though it is not absolutely necessary.") Two pages later, we're given a passage from the story—and that's it. If I were Frank, I'd be pretty put out.

At least, though, his creation has attained a fiendish life of its own—the dream of many a writer. For every writer's nightmare, however, see this issue's installment of "My Darkest Fantasy" by San Franciscan LARRY TRITTEN, last seen here with "The Grey Lawns Cold" (TZ Dec., '84).

Over the years, the stories submitted to TZ have tended to fall into certain familiar types, and one of the most common is the pact-with-the-devil story. It's a species I dislike, in part because the endings are always so predictably defeatist (with such notable exceptions as *The Devil and Daniel Webster*); Satan always triumphs in some ironic or "humorous" fashion over a Mere Mortal Who Thought He Could Cheat Fate. But in the hands of someone like BRUCE JAY FRIEDMAN, the theme seems brand new. Friedman, the author of *Stern, A Mother's Kisses*, a host of big-bucks screenplays, and, most recently, *Tokyo Woes*, is one of the funniest and most stylish writers alive; when it comes to describing New Yorkers, no one can touch him. Our

story here, *A Foot in the Door*, appears in his collection *Far from the City of Class*.

I came across this issue's M.R. JAMES tale in Rosemary Pardoe's little English magazine *Ghosts & Scholars*, devoted to the James tradition. It's a minor piece at best, but it does have the master's dry, donnish humor and a few typically understated chills. MICHAEL COX, who tells how he discovered the story, is the author of Oxford's *M.R. James: An Informal Portrait*. (James was also profiled by Mike Ashley in the December '81 TZ.) *Ghosts & Scholars'* American distributor—and the publisher of such provocative little magazines as *Fantasy* and *Terror* and *Doppelgänger*—is RICHARD FAWCETT, a superintendent of schools in Connecticut and author of the vignette on page 69—one modest in proportions but epic in its implications.

The *Bookshop* by NELSON BOND, the celebrated author of *Mr. Mergenthwarker's Lobbies*, *The Thirty-First of February*, and *Nightmares and Daydreams*, is a perfect example of a *Twilight Zone* story written long before that famous zone actually existed. It first appeared, with the same illustration, in the October 1941 *Blue Book* ("Stories of adventure for MEN, by MEN"), which also included—its subtitle notwithstanding—a story by Agatha Christie. Another illustration shows a struggling woman bound to a chair by a fiendish-looking Japanese, while a second villain declares, "We mean to have your signature at all costs, Miss Negli ... Tighter, Itol!" Bond's tale is the only one in the issue that hasn't dated—nor will it.

Anyone who's ever suffered from *l'esprit de l'escalier* or "staircase wit"—the inability to come up with a brilliant, devastating riposte till you've left the party and are already descending the stairs—will appreciate our



Bond



Shea



Dunkley



Blaine

story by JOHN SHEA, who's taught English (Bryn Mawr, U. of Pennsylvania), writes elegant fiction (*The Partisan Review*), and has another TZ story coming up. Also coming up: part two of the quiz by BEN P. INDICK, fantasy scholar, theater buff, and editor of the fanzine *Ibid*.

GARRY KILWORTH, author of *Image in a Dark Glass*—written on location in Greece—and of sf novels such as *Night of Kadar* and *A Theatre of Timesmiths*, is an ex-RAF man now living in the English village of Ashington, "where," he says, "the Vikings thrashed the English in 1015, and where the Danes have the audacity to build a commemorative bonfire every five years to remind us of their victory. The river where their longships were moored runs by my house." Another such villager is ROGER F. DUNKLEY (*Side-Tracked*), whose home is a place called Orin Cottage on a road called Green End in Bedfordshire. God, how English! He last appeared here with a very different sort of horror story, the controversial "Twisted Shadow" (TZ Feb. '85).

STEVEN POPKES (*Tip of the Scorpion*) is one of those rarities, a Californian now happily resettled in the East—Cambridge, no less. A physiologist-turned software designer, he's also had stories in *Galaxy* and *Asimov's*.

Speaking of resettlements, it's time for my VALEDICTORY ADDRESS:

Ladies and gentlemen, friends and alumni, we are gathered here today because . . . um . . . cough, cough . . . to honor the, uh . . . (*Drops speech. Bends down for it, loses glasses.*)

Oh, well, the hell with it. It's time to wave goodbye. Like someone once said (I think it was that guy from Ecclesiastes, but I always preferred the Byrds' version), to everything there is a season, and 'tis now the season for

the old buckaroo to pack his gear, steal a few bottles of Liquid Paper from the stockroom, and go riding off into the sunset of New York's teeming Upper West Side, pausing here and there to drop a crumpled candy-bar wrapper into the outstretched hand of a beggar. In other words, I'm hitting the trail. I feel it's high time I stopped monkeying around with other people's deathless prose and started turning out some of my own. I'm going home to sleep late, read the classics (maybe even *Daniel Deronda*, if I get really desperate), eat good healthy tofu-filled lunches, and Write That Novel—you know, the one you've always meant to write if only you could take a little time off from work.

The new guy around here is going to be MICHAEL BLAINE, an extraordinarily gifted (and award-winning) writer who's worked for a variety of publications, from *Redbook* to the *Village Voice*, and has headed up the journalism program at New York's La Guardia College, but who is best known to *Twilight Zone* readers as the author of "Kush" (Dec. '84) and "The Screening" (June '85). He has, to put it simply, The Right Stuff—though it's nice to know that, in a pinch, he'll be able to depend on the two people who really know how to put this magazine together, Alan Rodgers and Miriam Wolf.

Mike will be taking over as TZ's editor—and dealing, alas, with the reams of inventory I've left him—beginning next issue. Looking at the field today, I'm more firmly convinced than ever that *Twilight Zone* is the last, best hope of good supernatural fantasy and horror fiction. It's a pleasure to have worked on the magazine from its inception back in the fall of 1980, and I only hope that Mike has as much fun with it as I've had.

—TK

# Rod Serling's THE TWILIGHT ZONE Magazine

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## LETTERS

## Of Comic Strips and Kings

## THE GREAT COVER-UP

Dear Editor:

At an sf convention last month I heard a fascinating rumor: that your book reviewer, D.W. "Doc" Kennedy, is in reality Stephen King writing pseudonymously. Is there any truth to this?

—Arvin Dubrowski  
Cleveland, Ohio

We've admitted elsewhere in print that D.W. "Doc" Kennedy is a pseudonym for a well-known observer of the field, but "Doc" certainly is not Stephen King—or even Richard Bachman.

Still, those of you interested in bidding on the galley proofs know where to reach us.

## CAMERA OBSCURA

I assume I'll be among scores of readers to respond to this inquiry, but here goes . . .

The trilogy to which Ethan Walker refers in the June letters column is an Italian film entitled *I Tre Volti della Paura* (*Three Turns of Fear*), released in the States in 1964 as *Black Sabbath*. The three episodes are Anton Chekhov's "The Drop of Water," which Mr. Walker describes; "The Telephone," from a story by F.G. Snyder; and "The Wrudalak," adapted from Tolstoy. Directed by horrormeister Mario Bava, the movie featured Boris Karloff as linking narrator/"host" and (as a vampire) star of the third tale.

—Joe Blades  
New York, N.Y.

Scores of readers did eventually respond to Walker's query—among them Frank Thompson, Atlanta, Ga.; Norman Sukin, Billings, Mont.; Karen Dunha, Kreamer, Pa.; Maureen Duddy, Brooklyn, N.Y.; Jay Hadley, Plymouth, N.H.; Cheryl Ann Clark, Rochester, N.Y.; Cynthia Uffholz, Essex, Ont.; Barbara Brandes, Hamburg, N.Y.; and the writer of the minority opinion that follows.—Ed.

Dear Editor:

In response to Ethan Walker's letter concerning the source of a horror short he had seen involving a cursed ring, I believe the answer is a 1963 Italian film called *Black Sabbath*, directed by Mario Bava. That particular segment, called for some reason "The Drop of Water," is apparently based on a story by Anton Chekhov. Although I have seen the film only once, and that a while ago, I remember it as being rather shoddy. The second segment, a bizarre ghost story entitled "The Telephone," tried to be erotic and emerged as tasteless, and the third was a tired vampire tale bereft of novelty. In hindsight, Mr. Walker's "Drop of Water" would seem to be the least lifeless of the lot. Yet although Bava is reputed to be a very stylish director, that segment—like the others—displayed only a lack of artistic finesse. For at least this one unimpressed viewer, Mr. Walker's praise provokes comment.

"An excellent little bit of filming?" "A genuinely terrifying piece of work?" Hmm. Chacun à ses goûts. But whatever happened to "Amelia" from *Trilogy of Terror*?

—Andrew Draper  
Norwood, Mass.

## HARD-BOILED TZ

Dear Editor:

Speaking of "The Only Metaphor in Town" [TZ April 85], would you believe Raymond Chandler considered using *Twilight Zone* as a mystery title? *Zone* of *Twilight* was the title-to-be for a hard-boiled crime novel he planned but never wrote.

Chandler was also interested in fantasy stories, and wrote two: "The Bronze Door" (it appears in Peter Haining's *The Lucifer Society*) and "Professor Bingo's Snuff," both about disappearing persons—and stories you might consider for future issues.

—Terry Bigham  
Fairhaven, Mass.

## THE ANTI-SMUT BRIGADE

Dear Editor:

I recently subscribed to your magazine *Twilight Zone*. Upon receiving the first issue [TZ April '85], I was very disappointed with it. It contained a cartoon with nude drawings and sexual overtures and some of the stories had very strong obscenities. I would like to cancel my subscription and I would appreciate a refund.

—Ricky Box  
Decaturville, Tenn.

Dear Editor:

Rod Serling had a reputation for top-notch science fiction so why sully that reputation with the cheap pornographic material found on pages 88 and 89 of the April, 1985, Fourth Anniversary Issue. I'm into good writing, not smut!

—Patricia Gracia  
Fillmore, Cal.



The offending panel

Dear Editor:

I am extremely [sic] aggravated about this magazine. I bought this *Twilight Zone* not thinking it would be unsuitable for my 12 year old son. I thought *Twilight Zone* would have scary stories to read, but the blatant defiance of morals shown in this magazine are not fit for any decent person to read not less publish. The cartoons on pages 88-89 are the first thing I

(continued on page 19)

BOOKS /

Doc Kennedy

# A Celebration of Goddesses

It's been a hot season for Ancient Sumerian and Babylonian fiction. Why, years can go by, even millennia, without a new Gilgamesh book to talk about, and now, all of a sudden there are two! The one that would ordinarily fall under TZ's purview is Robert Silverberg's novel *Gilgamesh the King* (Arbor House, \$16.95), but a handsome new translation entitled simply *Gilgamesh* by John Gardner and John Maier (Knopf, \$18.95), turned out to be a better bet.

The epic, or poem, or legend, of *Gilgamesh* is incredibly old and was incredibly popular. Fragments of the story have been found on clay tablets in a number of different languages including Sumerian and Akkadian, (a.k.a. Babylonian), and some of them are nearly five thousand years old. There was, in fact, a real Gilgamesh, a king of Uruk, a city-state on the Euphrates River near the mouth of Persian Gulf, in the region known as Sumer, now part of Iraq.

The epic, however, deals with the mythic world rather than the real one. It starts when the people of Uruk cry out to the gods to deliver them from the tyrant Gilgamesh, who is oppressing the young men of the city by setting them at hard labor on his various building projects, and, far worse, oppressing the young women sexually; indeed, no girl is safe from him.

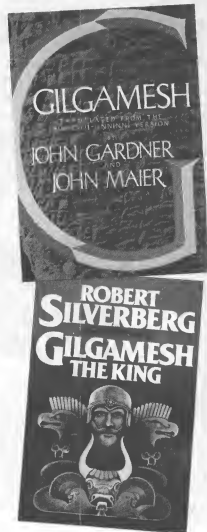
Responding to the people's prayers, the gods create a sort of rough copy of Gilgamesh, a "wild man" named Enkidu, who lives with the beasts of the field. A wily hunter enlists the aid of a temple prostitute to "tame" Enkidu through the civilizing power of sexual love, and they then take him back to Uruk. Just as Gilgamesh is about to deflower yet another virgin, Enkidu accosts him. They fight—and fall for each other. The girls of Uruk are safe.

No sooner are the two men enchanted with each other than they decide to make a name for themselves as

heroes. They go off to conquer the demon Huwawa. (That's the Sumerian name; in Akkadian it's Humbaba. Silverberg follows the Sumerian names, while the Gardner-Maier translation uses the Akkadian version.) The two heroes vanquish the demon gloriously and attract the attention of Innana (in Akkadian, Ishtar), the city-goddess of Uruk. She offers herself to Gilgamesh, but he refuses her contemptuously. Enraged, she prevails upon the other gods to send down "the bull of heaven." When the heroes vanquish that creature too, the gods decide that one of them has got to go. Because Gilgamesh is "two-thirds divine, one-third human," they decree that it shall be Enkidu—whereupon he falls sick and dies.

Gilgamesh is inconsolable. Not only does he miss Enkidu terribly, but he is also in mortal fear of his own death. So he decides to make a pilgrimage to "the abyss," the nether world, to find the one person who has attained immortality, the Noah-figure Ziusudra (in Akkadian, Utnapatishim). The journey is dreadfully long and dreadfully hard, taking him over impassable mountains, through thick darkness and arid waste. Throughout the ordeal, he is unable to sleep. Everyone he encounters tells him how dreadful he looks. When finally the demigoddess Siduri, a kind of divine barmaid, arranges his passage across the Waters of Death, the boatman makes him pole the boat all the way—which wears him out even more.

When Gilgamesh finally gets to Ziusudra, instead of immortality, he gets a story, a very long story having to do with the Flood, and not dissimilar to the familiar one in the Bible. At the end of the story, Ziusudra says, in effect, "So you want to conquer death? Well, let's see first if you can conquer sleep." With that, the hitherto sleepless but totally exhausted Gilgamesh falls into a deep sleep that lasts for six days. In other words, he flunks the test.



Defeated, he prepares to go home. But Mrs. Ziusudra takes pity on him and, almost as an afterthought, steers him to the magic seaweed of immortality. Like a responsible king (you can see how he has changed) he takes this home toward the city—but on the way a serpent steals it from him. Home he goes, toward Innana.

Silverberg has taken this basic epic, tied in some other Sumerian tales concerning Gilgamesh, and presented the whole as an historical novel, ra-

tionally explained—demonic figures thus turn into forces of nature, volcanoes and tornadoes and such. Does it work? No, I don't think it does. To my surprise and disappointment, despite much thoughtful attention to detail, Silverberg has turned a really thrilling tale into a dull book. It's not a *bad* book, just rather earnest and plodding in the way of so many historical novels.

The fault isn't in the demythologizing of the story. That could work fine, and at times it does (though I can't help wonder why a writer who spends most of his professional life creating wonders would want to strip them all from this story). But no, it seems to me that Silverberg's failure is structural and dramatic.

To begin with, he has made Gilgamesh too sympathetic. By writing in the first person and by starting the story in his childhood, he has turned the tyrant into Mr. Nice Guy—and pulled the teeth of his tale. Gilgamesh is *not* a nice guy. If he were nice, there would be no Enkidu, no quarrel with Innana, no punishment and sorrow, no long painful journey toward expiation and redemption.

And by skewing the character of Gilgamesh, he has necessarily distorted that of his great opponent, Innana. When, in the epic, Gilgamesh rejects her, this is supreme *hubris*, a terribly impious act (though admirable in a *macho* way), and bound to get him in to deep trouble—which it does. But Silverberg makes *her* the one who steps out of line in making the offer. In doing so, he loses the drama; if Gilgamesh has not defied the goddess, then why is all this tragedy happening to him?

I don't want to get too psychoanalytical about this, but I do think Silverberg is all off base on the sexual side of the story. He doesn't want to make Gilgamesh and Enkidu homosexual lovers—well, okay, though there's evidence to the contrary. But I think it's wrong to show the boys swapping concubines and then (O impious author!) to have Gilgamesh rolling in the hay with the divine Siduri—there's not a *shred* of evidence that way.

On the contrary, whether Gilgamesh's love for Enkidu is sexual or not, it is clearly the most powerful emotion Gilgamesh has ever experienced, and he gives himself to it completely (much to the relief of the citizens of Uruk). When Gilgamesh spurns Innana, he is spurning *women* as well; he has

Enkidu instead. And that will never do, not for a king who has to be husband to the goddess. This is a very sexy epic when it wants to be (Enkidu's rapturous coupling with the temple prostitute could hardly be more explicit, and his blessing her on his deathbed is a lovely counterpart to Gilgamesh's taunting of the goddess). But after he meets Enkidu, there are no more women for Gilgamesh. And after Enkidu dies, there is, or should be, no more sex. Now, that is serious.

I miss, in short, the fine, fierce simplicity of cause and effect, the grand unrolling of fate. To find it, I direct you to the Gardner-Maier book. Not that this is perfect. There are some odd lines, for instance when the authors try to avoid the homosexuality issue by repeating many times, "He hugged him like a wife" instead of the more natural "embraced." It sounds strange, and it isn't fooling anyone. What's even more comical is their dubbing three of the major secondary characters the Stalker, the Barmaid,

and the Boatman—they sound like refugees from *The Hunting of the Snark!*

But quibbles aside, this is a fine book for the lay reader. The epic itself is there, broken lines and all, and it makes wonderful reading. There are maps, photographs of the fragmented clay tablets, plenty of notes, and lots of background, both archaeological and historical. John Gardner, by the way, was the author of *Grendel* and *The Sunlight Dialogues*, and he had a strong interest in mythology.

For me, then, there's more magic in the epic itself than in the novel. Go with the real thing.

For a while, things look promising in *The Enchantress*, by Han Suyin (Bantam, \$16.95), best known for her romantic East-meets-West novel, *A Many-Splendored Thing*. As far as I know, this is the first time she has attempted fantasy.

Her first few pages are exemplary. In them, we learn that twins, a boy and girl, live, during the eighteenth

## Stephen King \* Berni Wrightson Cycle of the WEREWOLF



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century, near Lausanne and that the girl has some extraordinary powers while the boy, otherwise normal (except for a clubfoot), can "receive" her thoughts. We find out, too, that their mother is thought by some (this is religion-torn Switzerland, post-Luther and Calvin) to be a witch, while the father is a maker of "automata and androids."

Enticing. And when it develops that the mother is indeed the heir to potent Celtic female magic, which is then passed on to her daughter, while the boy becomes a master watch-maker and himself an android designer, with a strong interest in the new learning, philosophy, and science of the age of Reason, things look just fine.

But then Mrs. Suyin sends her twins off to China, and the novel takes a nose-dive. The boy, Colin, is set to work repairing the emperor's mechanical marvels. (The Chinese love this sort of thing; remember Hans Christian Andersen's "The Emperor's Nightingale"?) Bea, the girl, sets out to work her wiles on the emperor, but without success. The twins then go south to Ayuthia, the fabled, now-ruined Thai city, where Colin falls in love with a woman destined for religious sacrifice. Bea marries a Thai prince and gets involved with court politics, ending up cynical and slightly batty at the ripe age of twenty-eight.

What's wrong with this picture? Well, as Anton Chekhov said, you do not display a loaded pistol in Act One unless you intend to make use of it before the final curtain. The audience will not forgive you. And you do not endow your heroine with ancient Celtic magical powers, setting her up, in effect, as "the ancient power of fright and lust," and then not follow through. To have her dwindle into just one of the gals in the harem, whose only powers seem to lie in the realm of that ol' black magic that we know so well, is not kosher. It's a cheat. Ms. Suyin cheats with her title, too—several hundred pages along, she coyly tells us that Ayuthia itself, the city, is "the enchantress." Humbug, say I.

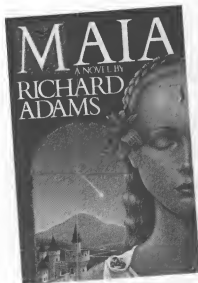
Ms. Suyin's other problem is that she has done a lot of research and is unwilling to waste a word of it. Lifeless historical figures, creaky intrigues, and snippets of guidebook lore clutter her pages. Again, the failure in the novel is technical. Had she anchored it in the West, to concentrate on the rich material offered by her original premise, she might have had a winner. Had

she gone all out with an old-fashioned harem romance set in the East, she might have had a miniseries. But the twin don't meet. Not here, anyway.

A harem romance is exactly what you get in *Maia*, by Richard Adams (Knopf, \$19.95). Adams is the British fantasy writer who has won American hearts with his rabbits (*Watership Down*), dogs (*The Plague Dogs*), and bear (*Shardik*). His subject his time is teenage "bed-girls," sex slaves to the decadent aristocracy of Bekla, the capital city of the same fantasy empire in which *Shardik* is set.

Our girl *Maia* is sold by a wicked stepmother to a trader who in turn sells her to a gluttonous, kinky nobleman, highly placed in the city. She learns all about sex from him, from other nobles she's loaned out to, and from Occula, a witchy black slave girl who becomes her best friend and bedmate. Her beauty and innocence soon make her a favorite, and, willy-nilly, she is drawn into a tangle of intrigue so complicated that even she can't sort it out (the reader soon gives up trying). Skipping over a great deal of plot, we come to an Evil Queen, a Hairsbreadth Escape, a True Love, an Act of Treachery and/or Heroism (depending on whose side you take), and presto, chango—*Maia* is not only not a slave girl any longer, but the most important woman in Bekla, acclaimed as a demigoddess by the populace, a sure thing to be elected as Sacred Queen (you can imagine what the current evil Queen thinks of that), listened to by general and counselors, and still the same sweet simple sixteen-year-old lass that she's always been.

It's easy to make fun of this novel, and that's just what most of the mainstream reviews have done. Adams's attitude toward his heroine is that of fondly avuncular condescension. (All the girls in the book chatter exactly, but I mean exactly, like his rabbits, and their made-up gutter language—*zards* and *vendas* and *basting* in place of more familiar words—is rather comical.) The book is terribly talky, especially in its second half, and not exactly believable, though a good deal more believable than the adventures of Conan and the gang. But there's something to be said for *Maia*. Adams has a fine storytelling sense, even if he does get bogged down a bit. For at least its first six hundred pages or so (the book is more than a thousand pages long), the story is totally absorbing in the



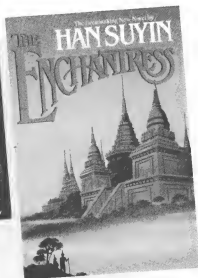
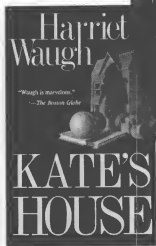
way of any successful escape literature. If the characters and elements are familiar to the point of cliché—well, this is a fairy tale, isn't it? The peasant girl who becomes a princess and heroine, who must then go through adventure and hardship to save her true love, is a pulp favorite, too, and this is something of a high-priced pulp book (complete with pulp prurience in a variety of sex scenes), but not nearly the worst of them.

It's the sort of book, in fact, that you might like to have on hand for the next time you have the megirms or the collywobblers or anything that puts you down but not quite out. It's undemanding, long, fairly sexy, good-hearted, and a bit foolish—just what the doctor would order.

Now that Stephen King has come out of the closet as Richard Bachman (a revelation hinted at as strongly as I dared in the TZ column before last), are we going to have twice as many books to review? Is there no stopping the man?

The new one, *Skeleton Crew* (Putnam's \$18.95), is a collection of short fiction. The novella, "the Mist," is reprinted from *Dark Forces*. You remember, that's the one about the bunch of people trapped in the supermarket while all the insectlike things menace them from out of the mist. I always liked that story—killing a thing with a can of Raid seems absolutely essential King in some way—and I was pleased to find him mentioning the story's "cheery cheesiness." Right on, Steve-o.





characters are wonderful on all levels. The way that they cope with Kate's whims is sometimes hilarious (check when Kate decides that Princess Lily is to become a prostitute). The writing is precise, wise, quite lovely. I suppose "clever" is the operative word here, but actually I think that diminishes the book. "Ingenious," maybe. And very much recommended.

Also recommended for what it is, which is a paperback original of no great ambition, is *People of the Dark*, by T.M. Wright (Tor, \$3.50). The premise of this book, that the earth itself conjures up humanoid figures—homunculi, I guess—and that these have murderous instincts, is extremely shaky. Once you get past that, though (and it takes some suspension of disbelief, not once but several times in the book) as a read, this isn't bad at all.

A young couple takes a house in New England. Pretty soon the wife begins to act a little weird, sitting alone in the dark, knowing things she oughtn't. Jack, the husband, blunders along in the way of husbands; then, when the wife disappears, he tries to find her, and various strange things occur. T.M. Wright writes quite well, though, and next time, when (s)he's on firmer ground (so to speak) logically, I'd like to see the book.

Oddest of the items here under scrutiny is *The Faces of Science Fiction* (Bluejay, \$11.95), a collection of eighty-two black and white photographs of writers taken by Patti Perret. What, I ask my bemused self, is the audience for this book? It would seem to me that the only ones who really wanted it—one of the eighty-two chosen—would surely be entitled to a free

copy from the publisher. Can there really be enough fans and collectors to create a market? Maybe.

At any rate, the photographs, though Ms. Perret is touted as a "professional photographer," are not, by and large, very professional; many of them, in fact, are on the college yearbook level. The three (*three!*) introductions take the silly self-serving tone that is so common in prose sci-fi collections and actually slip below the yearbook level, even the one by Gene Wolfe, a writer I admire. There is, however, a certain fascination to the book, as there is to college yearbooks.

It's amazing how downright, er, homely many of these writers are. It's also amazing how much better looking, as a group, the women are than the men. This isn't gallantry or any kind of chauvinism speaking. Only seventeen of these faces are of women (three in dual portraits with spouses), and they range from pleasant-looking to downright beautiful. At least they all look *normal* (well, maybe with one exception), which certainly cannot be said of the men. It's almost as if that favorite fantasy of the fifties, which featured a planet on which the males were horrendous BEMs while the females were excessively nubile humanoids, was a self-fulfilling prophecy. One doesn't want to make fun of people who can't help the way they look—but couldn't a little songbird chirp in the collective ear of Messrs. Edward Bryant and Jack Haldeman II that the sixties freak look is a bit passé? They could help it. Maybe they're waiting to grow as old as Damon Knight, on whom it looks terrific, or as portly as Gardner Dozois, on whom it forms part of a startling gestalt.

Other observations: The art on most of the writers' walls is terrible. Alfred Bester has a nice house. Was Somtow Sucharitkul wise to dress up in an Indian suit? Was it a good idea for Robert Silverberg to pose as an odalisque? Algis Budrys and Ray Bradbury to appear to live in the same basement. Ian Wallace and Frank Belknap Long are two of the eleven folk, I think. Women writers like to be portrayed with animals.

My favorite portrait herein, and one of the very few that show any style, is that of the author of the wonderful children's fable, "The Brave Little Toaster." Thomas Disch looks impish and ever so slightly sinister reflected in the side of his toaster. Could be a book jacket in that. 12

The rest of the stories range from the elegant ("Word Processor of the Gods," a beautifully crafted tale of a machine with extraordinary powers) to the dumb (nearly all the straight science fiction) to the forgettable (I've forgotten) to Yecch City (two tales of cannibalism: one "The Raft," a group effort, and the other, "Survivor Type," an individual affair—God, I wish I could forget these!). And there's the scary, too. Of course, of course. Go ahead and read it—everyone else will. You'll like it. There are some good stories in it. Find out for yourself.

From England comes a slight but elegant fantasy that ought to please readers. *Kate's House* (St. Martin's, \$12.95) is by Harriet Waugh (daughter of Evelyn, sister of Auberon) and takes the premise that a real rooming house in a seedy sector of Notting Hill, in London, is somehow an analogue of a dollhouse owned by a not very nice little girl named Kate. (I like the baleful little girls in these English novels.) Kate peoples the house with a miserably unhappy couple, with an African prince who gets to go to Lady Di's wedding, with a squatter and his daughter, and with an old witch. The plot develops around the fact that Kate decides to make the couple have a baby. But the real-life analogue of the mother-to-be, Margery, hasn't had sexual relations with anyone for over a year. *Ergo, naturally*, she decides that she must have been chosen for the Second Coming. When the baby, a girl, arrives, it is addressed as Goddess.

This novel is full of plums. The

# ETC.

## TZ PROFILE:

### TANYA ROBERTS: PUTTING HER STOCK IN BOND

*The small-screen angel turned big-screen jungle queen is tackling a new role—helping James Bond save the world.*



TZ Interviewer James Verniere Reports:

Tanya Roberts, the only Charlie's Angel to make the transition from television to the silver screen successfully (Farrah, Jackie, Kate, and Shelley all bombed out), tossed her halo into the trash bin the day she did a topless scene in Don Coscarelli's cult hit, *The Beastmaster*. (And what ever happened to him?) She then added insult to injury by posing nude for a *Playboy* photo spread. But it was all part of a plan, she explains. According to Roberts, the slave-girl supporting role in *Beastmaster* and the nude-with-wild animals *Playboy* layout were career moves designed to land her the coveted role of Sheena.

Needless to say, the plan worked, but the film backfired. *Sheena*, a twenty-five-million-dollar turkey some have dubbed *Bunny of the Jungle*, earned less than \$3 million at the box office. But Tanya is still riding high (although not, thank God, on a painted horse). She went directly from *Sheena* to the set of the next James Bond film, *From a View to a Kill*, without passing go. Currently at work at Pinewood Studios opposite Roger Moore, Christopher Walken (who was cast as the film's villain after David Bowie dropped out), and disco-queen Grace Jones of *Conan the Destroyer* fame, Tanya Roberts seems invulnerable

to bad reviews. Pretty good for a girl from the Bronx.

Born twenty-eight years ago of Irish-Jewish descent, Tanya Roberts left home and school at fifteen to pursue a career in modeling and acting, performing both off-Broadway and in television commercials for products like Ultra-Brite and Kool Ray sunglasses. ("Most people think I emerged overnight," she says, "but I paid my dues.") After marriage, Roberts made the move to Los Angeles, where she found work in such grade-Z fare as *Tourist Trap*, *Zuma Beach*, and *Racquets*. But her stock went up astronomically when a search for the Charlie's Angel to fill in for Shelley Hack led to her getting the nod. Since then she's become Bo Derek's chief rival for the title "reigning sex star of the cinema," and she also took the time out to star opposite Stacy Keach in the pilot for the Mike Hammer television series, a show she dumped to pursue her screen career.

**TZ:** How much did you want the part of *Sheena*?

Roberts: Very much. I kept pestering my agent and the casting director. Finally I told them that if they didn't screen-test me I was going to kill myself.

**TZ:** Was the *Playboy* layout a successful career move?

Roberts: It was part of my publicity campaign, but as it turns out it hurt me more than it helped me. The producers of *Sheena* were not very happy, because they wanted to make a PG film and they were worried about my image. In fact, now the Bond people want me to do another *Playboy* layout to promote their film. But I told them that I'd done it once and I wasn't planning to do it again, for Bond or anyone else.

**TZ:** You had to bleach your hair blond to play Sheena. Why was it so important that the character be a blonde?

Roberts: I think they felt that Sheena had to have a naive, childlike quality. Now I like my hair blond and I'm going to keep it that way for the Bond film.

**TZ:** What kind of part will you have in *From a View to a Kill*?

Roberts: I can't tell you too much about it, but I play a geologist who helps Roger Moore save the world. It's the female lead, and I think I'm going to have a lot of fun making it. With Christopher Walken and Grace Jones, it definitely has one of the strongest casts I've ever worked with.

**TZ:** Why did you choose to make your post-Charlie's Angels film debut in a low-budget horror film in a supporting role?

Roberts: Because I didn't want the book thrown at me in my first outing the way it was thrown at Farrah.

TZ: Why do you think you've been able to make the tv-to-screen transition?

Roberts: Because I was the only one who started in film to begin with.

The others were new to acting when they were cast in *Charlie's Angels*. I was a veteran, more or less.

TZ: Do you resent the fact that it was the most highly publicized role of your career?

Roberts: Yes. Instead of getting good publicity because I had been nominated for an Academy Award or something, I got it for a show that was sort of a non-acting show. It's like being famous for nothing, and it's turned into something I've had to fight in order to get film parts.

TZ: I understand that you and your husband, Barry, have a couple of projects in the works.

Roberts: Yes, we have our own production company, and we're trying to get some films produced. Things are looking much better for me since we last spoke during the opening of *The Beastmaster*. I've got a little more weight to throw around, so I get more scripts sent to me than ever before. It's really going well for a change. (Knocks on wood.)

TZ: The Bond films have never been very good vehicles for the women. Why not?

Roberts: Well, like *Charlie's Angels*, the Bond films have not always had real actresses in them. More often the women in the films have been former models or "celebrities" of some sort. So I don't think you can blame the films themselves if the careers of those women didn't take off. I want to do the film because it gives me the chance to play someone bright and sophisticated. The character is definitely not just a girl on Bond's arm. Besides, it's nice to know that you're going to be in a guaranteed smash hit. Not many films are such sure-fire bets.

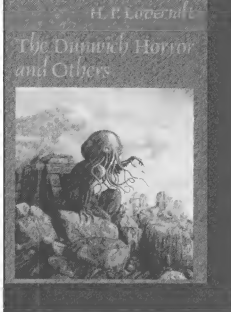
TZ: What will Tanya Roberts be doing in twenty years?

Roberts: Not parading around in a bikini, I hope. You see, I've got a kind of contradictory career. On the one hand, I have real acting credentials. On the other hand, I am perceived as a kind of sex symbol. I guess if I can't make the transition, I'll be home in twenty years worrying about the kids.

## THE DEFINITIVE LOVECRAFT

Ever since its inception in 1939, when it brought out the legendary volume *The Outsider and Others*, Arkham House has been dedicated to preserving the work of H.P. Lovecraft in hardcover form. Now its three major collections of Lovecraft's fiction currently in print have been painstakingly corrected by Lovecraft scholar S.T. Joshi ("Something About Cats," TZ August '83), who has gone back to HPL's original manuscripts and has discovered hundreds of errors in the standard texts. The publishers have just released the first of these corrected editions, *The Dunwich Horror and Others*, with a superb full-color cover by Raymond Bayless (depicting old Cthulhu emerging from his aeons-long hibernation) and

a new introduction by Robert Bloch. This hefty volume, in the familiar Arkham House black binding with gold-stamped spine, is \$15.95 postpaid from Arkham House Publishers, Box 546, Sauk City, Wis. 53583. The second volume, *At the Mountains of Madness and Other Novels*, will be ready this fall (price to be announced), with the final volume, *Dagon and Other Macabre Tales*, scheduled for the summer of 1986. Clearly these books are musts for Lovecraft lovers; as the publishers note, "This projected three-volume set will become the definitive presentation of the collected fiction by one of the most influential American authors of the twentieth century."



## THE NOT-SO-CLOUDED CRYSTAL BALL

George Orwell's vision of 1984 was more a nightmare—and a warning—than an actual prediction, but sf/mystery writer Anthony Boucher (1911-1968), founding editor of *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, may have been a bit closer to the mark. In "The Other Inauguration," published in *F&SF* in

1953, he describes the Presidential election of Tuesday, November 6, 1984—a landslide in which an archconservative candidate ("From now on, folks, it's Americanism for Americans!") defeats a liberal, carrying forty-nine of the fifty states. (The one holdout, however, is not Minnesota but Maine.)

Thanks to Jon White

ETC.

## SWAMP CYPRESS

A bent old hag, she crouches in the mud,  
The swamp-mud blackening her gnarled knees,  
And lets her matted grey locks loosely fall  
About her shoulders, flapping in the breeze;  
Stands in the swamp mire where the rivers meet  
And sings a song both sinister and sweet:

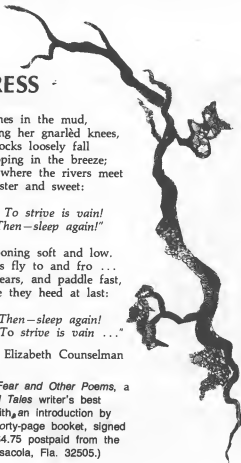
"Sleep! Sleep is god of all! To strive is vain!  
Life's but a waking hour. Then—sleep again!"

Stands in the dark fen, crooning soft and low.  
Swamp-creatures listen, birds fly to and fro ...  
But men should stop their ears, and paddle fast,  
And cross themselves before they heed at last:

"Life's but a waking hour. Then—sleep again!  
Sleep! Sleep is god of all. To strive is vain ..."

—Mary Elizabeth Counselman

(Reprinted from *The Face of Fear and Other Poems*, a selection of this popular *Weird Tales* writer's best work, edited by Steve Eng, with an introduction by Joseph Payne Brennan. The forty-page booklet, signed by the poet, is available for \$4.75 postpaid from the Eldolon Press, Box 8204, Pensacola, Fla. 32505.)



## MATHESON TRIBUTE

TZ stalwart Richard Matheson—novelist, screenwriter, author of classic tales of horror and some very classic episodes of *Twilight Zone*—is a man of enormous talent and an equally enormous output. Fans who've lost count of his works, which range from *The Beardless Warriors* (a little-known 1960 war novel) and *I Am Legend* to his recent screen adaptation of "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet," will find them all detailed in a handsome new fifty-six-page booklet, *Richard Matheson: He Is Legend*, containing a complete Matheson bibliography, photos, and memoirs by Ray Bradbury, Robert Bloch, Jack Finney, and William F. Nolan. It's yours for four dollars postpaid from Mark Rathbun (who coedited it with Graeme Flanagan), 390 Rio Lindo Avenue #86, Chico, Cal. 95926.

## TZ TRIVIA

Last fall we sponsored a TZ Trivia Contest in the pages of the TZ Trivia Special and on college campuses all over the country, and we promised to print the answers to the contest here in TZ. Well, here they are!

1. Who wrote "Nightmare at 20,000 Feet"?  
Richard Matheson
2. What Planet did "The Invaders" come from?  
Earth
3. Name the *Twilight Zone* episode that featured the director of last summer's *Splash*.  
"Walking Distance"
4. What was the name of the character he played?  
The Wilcox Boy
5. Which *Twilight Zone* episode did fantasy great Ray Bradbury write?  
"I Sing the Body Electric"
6. Name Bradbury's two unproduced *Twilight Zone* scripts.  
"Here There Be Tygers" and "A Miracle of Ray Device"
7. How many were written by Rod Serling?  
Ninety-two.

8. What was Rod Serling's full name?  
Rodman Edward Serling
9. Name the episode in which Serling said "File it under S, for superstition."  
Serling never said that!
10. Who is the only person to both direct a *Twilight Zone* episode and star in one?  
Ida Lupino
11. What actor played an astronaut in the *Twilight Zone* episode "Elegy," then reversed roles to become an alien scientist in *This Island Earth*?  
Jeff Morrow
12. In "The After Hours" what item is Marsha White looking for in the department store, and for whom?  
A gold thimble for her mother
13. Name the western series that Rod Serling created.  
"The Loner"
14. How many episodes of it were produced?  
Twenty-six.
15. Serling's script for *Planet of the Apes* was based on whose novel?  
Pierre Boulle's
16. What was that novelist's most famous work?

- The Bridge on the River Kwai*
17. Which *Star Trek* regular did not appear in a *Twilight Zone* episode?  
DeForest Kelley, Grace Lee Whitney, Nichelle Nichols, Majel Barrett, or Walter Koenig
18. Serling once planned to write a spin-off series for the man who played the Penguin on tv's *Batman*. What *Twilight Zone* episodes would it have been based on?  
"Mr. Bevis" and "Cavender is Coming"
19. *Twilight Zone—The Movie* featured a character named Helen Foley. Who was the original Helen Foley?  
Rod Serling's high school English teacher
20. How much does an ice-cream soda cost in Homewood?  
In Martin's present, an ice-cream soda costs 35¢. In his childhood, it costs a dime.

The contest's four finalists are Robert Montemarano of Brooklyn, New York; Greg W. Myers of Elida, Ohio; Shawn Marshall of Tucson, Arizona; and Lisa Z. Gutierrez of Gardena, California.

QUIZ! Ben P. Indich

# Break a Leg!\*

## A Theatrical Fantasy Quiz

Many a fantasy has made it to the Great White Way, and some are among the treasures of the stage. Here are a few—some of them musicals, some not, but all in some measure fantastic. Each is represented by a single quotation. Give yourself a point for every correct title and two points for every author's, lyricist's, and composer's name you can also supply. Anyone with 75 points or more deserves an orchestra seat. Anyone with over 100 deserves a percentage of the gross! Answers below.

1. "Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships, and burnt the topless towers of Ilium?—Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss."

2. "Children know such a lot now. Soon they won't believe in fairies, and every time a child says 'I don't believe in fairies,' there is a fairy somewhere that falls down dead."

3. "Ease on down, ease on down the road. Come on, ease on down, ease on down the road. Don't you carry nothin' that might be a load. Come on, ease on down, ease on down the road, ease on down, down the road."

4. "All that was base in Quint lives in Miles. He lives with the memory, the longing for all that Quint taught him. I must free him of it. Even if I must hurt him."

5. "I can't bear it. They're so young and beautiful. Why did they ever have to get old? Mama, I'm here. I'm grown up. I love you all, everything—I can't look at everything hard enough."

6. "Deep in December, it's nice to remember, the fire of September that made us mellow. Deep in December our hearts should remember—and follow."

7. "There's Liadoff and Karganoff,

Markievith, Pantschenko, and Dargo-mytsky, Stcherbatcheff, Scriabine, Vassilenko, Stravinsky, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Moussorgsky and Gretchaninoff, and Glazounoff and Caesar Cui, Kalinikoff, Rachmaninoff, Stravinsky and Gretchaninoff, Rumshinsky and Rachmaninoff—I really have to stop, the subject has been dwelt upon enough!"

8. "Oh, my name is John Wellington Wells, I'm a dealer in magic and spells, in blessings and curses, and ever-filled purses, in prophecies, witches and spells."

9. "You are a wise man, Professor, for one who has not even lived a single lifetime."

10. "There isn't many that would steal a ruby out of an idol's head, and such an idol as that was to look at, and on such a night. You're brave enough, Bill. But you're all three of you fools."

11. "I started to walk down the street when I heard a voice saying: 'Good evening, Mr. Dowd.' I turned, and there was this great white rabbit leaping against a lamppost."

12. "There in the highlands, the highlands of Scotland, two weary hunters

lost their way. And this is what happened, the strange thing that happened to two weary hunters who lost their way."

13. "Ruth! Elvira! I know damn well you're there. I just want to tell you that I'm going away, so there's no point in your hanging about any longer."

14. "[I] want every star in heaven hangin' in the room, shinin' in my eyes when I hear my doom. Reckon my sins are good big ones, and the punishment won't be small, so take me before the highest one, and let me be judged by the highest judge of all."

15. "When the first wrong was done to the first Indian, I was there. When the first slaver put out for the Congo, I stood on her deck. Am I not in your books and stories and beliefs, from the first settlement on? Am I not spoken of still in every church in New England? 'Tis true the North still claims me for a Southerner and the South for a Southerner, but I am neither. I am merely an honest American like yourself."

16. "If we shadows have offended, Think but this, and all is mended—That you have but slumber'd here While these visions did appear."

## ANSWERS

1. "The Taming of the Shrew," by William Shakespeare
2. "The Secret Garden," by Frances Hodgson Burnett
3. "Easy on Down the Road," by Tom Jones, music by Harry L. Sullivan
4. "The Time of Your Life," by Stephen Vincent Benét
5. "The Wizard of Oz," by L. Frank Baum
6. "The Fire of St. Elmo," by Richard Rodgers
7. "The Liadoff and Karganoff," by Richard Rodgers
8. "The Sorcerer," book and lyrics by Alan Jay Lerner, music by Frederick Loewe
9. "The Professor," by John Galsworthy
10. "The Night of the Hunter," by John Badham
11. "The White Rabbit," by Lewis Carroll, book and lyrics by Richard Rodgers
12. "The Highlanders," by W.S. Gilbert, music by Arthur Sullivan
13. "The Elvira and Ruth," by Elvira and Ruth
14. "The Star in the Room," by Elvira and Ruth
15. "The First Indian," by Elvira and Ruth
16. "The Shadows," by Elvira and Ruth

\*If you don't recognize this as theatrical parlance for "Good luck," you'd better skip this quiz!

MY DARKEST FANTASY

*Lovey Truller*

## Terror from the Postal Zone



My darkest fantasy starts with a bang and ends with a series of stentorian whimpers. It is a by-product of the way I make a living, freelance writing, which in this post-McLuhan latter half of the twentieth century can perhaps be likened to buffalo hunting a hundred years ago—or, say, interning in a quarry with Sisyphus.

As a kid I always wanted to be a writer, but I never suspected that I would be able to make the grade so easily. Twenty-four years ago, at the age of twenty-one, after being discharged from the Army and facing the unnerving prospect of having to "do something" or "be something" ("What are you going to do?" and "What are you going to be?" were the questions ceaselessly asked by my parents, their friends, the state employment agency, bartenders, etc.), I more or less by reflex invoked my longtime fantasy of wanting to be a writer and wrote a story about a young soldier's ithyphallic adventures among the Oriental ladies of the night. "Write what you know about" was the consensual advice of most of the experienced wielders of the pen, and that was just about all I knew about after spending my nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first birthdays in the Far East.

I sent the story to one of the many garden-variety men's magazines

of the time, and soon (*voilà!*) a check returned. I was startled. What about all those stories about seven hundred submissions and three or four years spent in the trenches before the afflatus loomed? Like someone who has off-handedly caught a Xerxes blue butterfly in a dixie cup, I tried again, although with minimal confidence. Another check! The engines of the ego were beginning to rev up. This seemed to be about as difficult as getting confetti in your hair at a New Year's party. These checks were for a hundred bucks or more, too, which in the early 1960s could still pay the rent for three months on a place that had no resemblance whatever to the blind beggar's hut in *Frankenstein*. The water was, as they say, fine—and I was in it.

I began to produce stories regularly for magazines with names like *Glimmer*, *Glom*, *Romp*, *Lark*, *Spritz*, and the like. A few years passed. In time I would find myself selling to magazines like *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, *The New Yorker*, *Harper's* and *Travel & Leisure*.

During the late sixties and early seventies I played much more intently than I worked (the culture was having a party and I was one of its merriest celebrants), but by the late seventies I was ready to court my muse with undivided attention. Things got pretty good, especially with the help of regu-

lar exposure as resident satirist in the *Los Angeles Times* Sunday Calendar.

Then a new Chief Executive came into power, and the economy (as it applied to me, in any case) flashed the *TILT* sign. Getting by, which until then had been relatively easy (with the help of an occasional temporary job), became much less so. There came a time, not so long ago, when it occurred to me that rates of payment at certain magazines had fallen by a few hundred dollars—this concomitant with some living expenses that had tripled (e.g., food, rent, telephone, and electric bills). This makes progress hard. It means that by working three times as much, you can perhaps maintain the same standard of living. Unfortunately, writers are still paid by the word by most magazines, which is an antique system roughly approximate to using stones and hands as standards of measurement. And speaking of stones, with rates of payment diminishing by a third while prices triple, is there any doubt that freelance writing can be compared to hauling the stone of Sisyphus uphill? But there is a kicker here: writing can also be likened to playing a slot machine. Cherries will keep you in the game, but every writer knows that there's more and bigger fruit to be harvested if the blight keeps its distance. The bells and bars are

## LETTERS

(continued from page 8)

opened to. Imagine my surprise to see those pictures!!

Flip through the rest of the publication and come across an article about drive-in theaters, pages 18-19, 86-87. The Oath on page 18—"We are drive-in mutants..."—and the first paragraph on page 19—"Sometimes there'll be folks..." clinched it. I have already cancelled my subscription and asked for my money back.

I feel it would be wise to advertise your magazine on the same level [sic] as Hustler, Penthouse, and all the other Adults Only publications.

Was Rod Serling really perverted?

—Dianne K. Forand  
Gibbstown, N.J.

Dear Editor:

I am writing about the "Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind" reprimand letter [sic] included in your "Etc. Dimension" department in the February 1985 issue of your magazine. I was surprised and upset when one of my students showed me the "letter." I feel that the printing of it was in poor taste. I have classroom students who read your magazine and I would like them to continue but unfortunately, as a public school teacher, I cannot promote outright obscenities. I realize that students read and hear the like everyday from various media sources, however I cannot and will not encourage it. I would like you write to me and let me know whether or not your magazine is slanted toward the "adult" population. If yes, then I will remove your magazine from my classroom magazine rack.

—J. Jeanette Weaver  
Phoenix, Ariz.

Dear Editor:

When I first saw the magazine *Twilight Zone*, I was very excited about it, because I greatly admire Rod Serling's television series. Thus, I started to subscribe and began clipping out the television scripts and anything else pertaining to Mr. Serling. Unfortunately, since I started subscribing last Spring, there has been little in the magazine about Mr. Serling—and what has been there has been basically uninteresting or stupidly "intellectual." Also, they started putting less and less

on the shows themselves, and more and more fiction and reviews of current science fiction movies, books, etc. Quite frankly, the fiction is dull and I have no interest in the current bizarre [sic] science fiction. The magazine seems to miss the point of Rod Serling's brilliance much like the *Twilight Zone* movie did—Mr. Serling took average people, not bizarre ones, and placed them in situations where they had to make a moral decision. Most current science fiction and fan-

tasy is basically lacking in normal people and greatly lacking in morality. (And that R-rated cartoon in the last issue really gave the magazine a tacky look!) I believe it is harmful to take a good thing, like the *Twilight Zone* series, and analyze it to death. What's good is good, and the *Twilight Zone* magazine does not capture that goodness, and does not reflect Mr. Serling's brilliance.

—H. Becouvarakis  
Hampton, Va.

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Winning stories will be published in  
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### Rules

1. All entries must be original works of fiction, four thousand words or less. There is no minimum length.
2. The contest is open only to those who have never had fiction published professionally; all those who have received monetary payment for a piece of published fiction of whatever length (but not including poetry and plays) are ineligible.
3. Entries must be typewritten, with the writer's name, address, and telephone number on the first page. All entries to be

considered must include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return of the manuscript. Please note that we cannot acknowledge entries on receipt.

4. Writers may submit one entry only.
5. All non-prizewinning entries will nonetheless be considered for publication in the magazine.
6. The contest closes September 1, 1985. Mail entries to: Story Contest, TZ Publications, Inc., 800 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

# MY DARKEST FANTASY

there, too, and a keen and persistent player can rack them up, while the average working person is pretty much bound by a predictable salary.

In the meantime, the writer's darkest fantasy lurks beyond the horizon like a baleful cloud ...

Recently, after waiting for weeks to hear back from an editor about a story I had revised at his suggestion (which I had done and gotten in the mail within twenty-four hours of getting his letter, hoping to impress him with my speed), I finally decided to give him a call.

No, he told me, he'd never gotten the story the second time; the manuscript had never reached his mailbox. This was within a day of having another editor call me and ask if I'd gotten something he had mailed to me a couple of weeks earlier, which I'd never received; and a few days before Harlan Ellison told me that he had received a check from *Fantasy and Science Fiction* with what appeared to be bite taken out of it. A bite! It was as if Jaws was out there in the postal tide, Harlan had said. Do you hear the ominous music? Dun dun dun, dun dun dun ...

There are days when I watch the mailman come up the street from our top window with the same wary attention of a hawk casing a mouse in a meadow.

Now let the fantasy take darker shape ... Here's how it goes:

I'd been waiting for days for several checks I was expecting. None of them had come, yet a steady flow of rejections (from the forty or so submissions I always keep out) had washed into the mailbox. After so many years of professional writing, I usually get a personal response from an editor (if only a line or two) even with rejections. Curiously, for days all of the rejection notices had been printed slips, formal and uncongenial.

After several days of this I opened a manila envelope one morning and glimpsed the script of a pen at the bottom of the printed rejection slip, and sighed. And then read, "I'm sorry, but this humor piece doesn't seem particularly funny to us—I suspect in fact, that it would silence a hyena. I hope you'll try us again sometime after the next reappearance of Halley's Comet, by which time you will have had a chance to enroll and possibly even graduate from the Famous Writer's School or maybe take some night classes in creative writing while working for a

pesticide company."

That last part stunned me and provoked a moment of queasy *déjà vu*, because years ago, when it had been necessary to supplement my writing income, I had worked for a while as a clerk-typist at a pesticide company for a temporary employment agency—surely my least glamorous moment.

I opened a second envelope which had also come that day. An assistant editor had penned a note at the bottom of the rejection slip: "Our managing editor has asked me to tell you that we do not accept submissions from psychiatric outpatients, although feel free to try us again if he becomes one."

**Harlan Ellison  
had received a check  
with what appeared  
to be a bite taken  
out of it. It was  
as if Jaws was out  
there in the postal tide.**

I brooded for hours, then drank half a pint of whiskey (something I rarely touch) diluted with Pepsi Cola ... and found myself standing early in the evening at a window like Lawrence Talbot watching clouds drift slowly, across the face of a full moon. I had a sense of ... something indefinable, like a stirring of psychic shadows in my subconscious.

The next day three manila envelopes came in the mail. There was a rejection from the new editor at a venerable old men's magazine that I'd sold several pieces to in the seventies (he had written on the printed slip, "Try getting laid before you write about sex! Would you try to sell aluminum siding at San Simeon?"); a rejection from *The New Yorker*, on which an editor had written, "Have you tried this in New Jersey?"; and a rejection from an in-flight magazine whose editor wrote, "Sorry, doesn't fly. Try Greyhound." There was also a check for \$100 from a newspaper. An apparent bite had neatly excised the second zero from the numerical sum.

The next day's mail consisted of a rejection slip from *The Paris Review* (to which George Plimpton had per-

sonally appended the remark, "You punctuate fairly well, but perhaps video games are your real forte") and an advertising circular from the Famous Writer's School.

The next day brought a single rejection (from *Oui*, whose editor averred *Non!*) in a manila envelope, one end of which was semicircular and vaguely serrated, making it look as if a bite had been taken out of it.

During the rest of the week there was no mail. Nada. Over forty submissions out and not a single return or acceptance. It was on Saturday morning, while watching the unsmiling mailman come up the block, that the subliminal twinge he had always aroused in me was transformed into a sudden cold awareness: he had been the behind-the-counter companion of the newsstand clerk who, a couple of years earlier, had snapped at me ill-temperedly for looking through a magazine, and who I had answered by drawing an impassioned analogy between him and one of the busiest of our bodily orifices. Even as the realization dawned on me, he turned his face toward the window and, from the distance, as if seeing me, improbably smiled.

There was no mail at all that day. Now my mind went under siege from memories of an old friend who had been a mailman and whose basement had been a virtual depository of exotic and expensive magazines (fears confirmed). *Serpico* might have been written, I gloomily realized, about the post office as well as the police department.

For the next two weeks the only mail I received was addressed to Occupant or Resident. Gradually, during this time, I acquired a vulpine stance (shoulders incipiently hunched) and an expression like that of one of the guests at one of Bosch's infernal barbecues.

Then, one wan and haunted morning, with the sun festering beneath a swath of grey cloud like a celestial boil, I watched the mailman come up the front steps with his gunfighter's slow lope and poker face, busily sorting and probing through his pouch in a distinctly portentous manner. I sidled into an alcove, closed my eyes, counted slowly to sixty, then rushed down the stairs ... to find a veritable bonanza of apocalyptic grief: forty-two manila envelopes. It was, as a glum and comatose check revealed, everything I had currently in submission. An almost supernatural effusion of rejection! Worse, every envelope contained a printed rejection slip save one, whose



editor asked if I would mind sending him a fingernail clipping and a lock of hair.

The next day I received forty-two pieces of junk mail.

The next day brought a bill for \$6,542.45 from the phone company, an obvious mistake. I called the phone company and talked to a curt and emotionless woman who said they would check into it. The next day she called back and said that the bill was correct. I pointed out the absurdity of the amount, citing the fact that the phone bill had hardly ever exceeded eighty dollars or so, and in the middle of my monologue our connection was abruptly broken. I could chronicle our dialectical tête-à-tête for the next few days, but to make the story short one morning two solemn men came and disconnected the phone.

In the meantime, I had also gotten a gas and electric bill for \$16,945.23 and had been fighting a two-front war with both companies. With the phone gone, I could no longer call in my protests to the utilities company. In any case, one morning they, too, shut off service. Shortly after the lights went out I sat at my typewriter in a dim room, cold as marble, my fingers poised. Helen Keller wrote her autobiography. I reminded myself, but my fingers congealed tremulously into fists.

None of my checks came. My money dwindled, vanished; the ants that had once festively borne the crumbs of ornate desserts and designer breads from the kitchen closed up shop, leaving me alone in the empty grey house. No mail of any kind came these days, and I no longer watched the mailman from the window, but paced through the flat with a shawl around my shoulders quoting errantly from *Jabberwocky*.

Then, one day, my mailbox was mysteriously gone.

No matter.

It became clear that I must find a new vocation. Those friends who came to visit, to hearten and console me, asked what I was going to do and what I was going to be.

One day I morosely applied for a job at the pesticide company where I had once clerked for the temporary agency. It was my job (again) to sit at an antique typewriter in a concrete room festooned with steel pipes and type up obituaries for silverfish, cockroaches, and the like. My consciousness became a sump in which memo-

ries of my life as a writer sank and vanished like colored stones.

I began to walk the streets aimlessly at night, and one cold evening, in a cloud-thick fog that hid even the facades of nearby buildings, I was seized from behind by two huge, rough men who manhandled me into an alley and down a long flight of stone steps.

We emerged in a subterranean cavern the size of a great ballroom, lighted by an inferno in a pit, the flames stunning the air with waves of heat and tides of churning smoke. There, incredibly, were gathered all of the editors who had ever bought my work — those who'd become friends and all of those I'd come to know in varying degrees through a spectrum of correspondence, phone conversations, and lunches. They were standing ranked in phalanxes like heavy infantry, but instead of having shields with spears overlapping, they were carrying copies of *The Chicago Manual of Style* and brandishing fountain pens whose razor-sharp nibs gleamed menacingly in the vermilion gloom. I was thrust to my knees before them, and one of them,

whom I recognized as an editor of one of the third-rate men's magazines of the sixties, stepped forward.

"I'm sorry . . ." he said, in a turgid monotone. The familiar phrase of morticians and editors. He moved closer and smiled down at me. "As Moloch once demanded living human sacrifices, so have the muses of literature, drunk on excesses of vanity and seduced by the temptation of cruelty, come to demand a periodic sacrifice of one of their suitors. You have been chosen. You do not meet our present needs or requirements. Please feel free, however, to try us during another incarnation . . . if any."

They advanced, and I was suddenly pressed toward the pit of flame by a circle of slashing pens like the knives of the assassins who murdered Caesar. Stabbed repeatedly, I stumbled toward the pit, bleeding, crazed, disbelieving. The roaring of the inferno was like the hammering keys of a monstrous typewriter writing the final sentence of my story, and its phrase of culmination:

THE END

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SCREEN/*Graham Wilson*

# That Was the Year That Was

George Orwell's 1984 is one of the most remarkable science fiction books ever written and certainly one of the most influential. We are probably still far too close to it to tell with any sort of clarity just *how* influential, but the farther we get from Orwell's day and from 1984 itself, the more we see how important the novel was in shaping vast multitudes of minds at a very

crucial time. Nobody is ever quite the same after reading it, or even after learning of its basic premise. I wouldn't be surprised if most people whose minds have been unalterably bent by the book never actually read it; more likely they just picked the gist of it up by osmosis, by references in television news programs, newspaper articles, and such.

Yet, is there anyone among us who is not perfectly clear in his heart of hearts just what Big Brother is? And Big Brother is the central message of the book. Big, friendly, looming, palsy-walsy, soul-crushing Big Brother is what flickers over our inner screens when we see some chummy mug on our tv sets or in the movies, and a little, terrified voice deep inside us



In the "ghastly, dismal, godawful world of 1984," John Hurt lives in a world of agonizing public confessions and unexplained disappearances.

screams, "Don't trust this mother!!!" Big Brother superimposes himself easily over the visage of a biggie leering confidentially up at us, like our best friend in the world from the covers of a flock of leading magazines which coincidentally happen to be doing a story about him, and we are rock-certain sure that we'd be crazy to buy a used car from a cold-hearted nut-case with eyes like that—so how in the name of creation has he managed to get himself in charge of the lives of millions of innocent suffering bastards who appear to love him and think he loves them?

The image of Big Brother is the 1984's best-known contribution to the popular imagination, and a useful and mightily helpful one it has been to us all. But there is also another element in the book, not so easy to get the feel of, true, but one for which we are all in Orwell's debt: Newspeak. Enough of us know what Newspeak means to have made the work of those in the thought-control game enormously more difficult. It hasn't put them out of business by any means, but by God it's vastly increased their problems and made closing the sale on a lot of rotten swindles an awful lot more complicated than heretofore.

Sometimes, when I realize I've just heard a politician pervert the meaning of a word in my language, I actually think of Orwell's term for the trick; other times, when some greedy bastard is solemnly presenting some moral issue bottom-side-up, I don't actually say to myself, "Newspeak" but a little bell does go off, and I smile and shake my head. He's lost me—and it wouldn't have happened that easily if I hadn't read 1984. Indeed, the little bell might not have gone off at all.

That's the scary part, and the reason why Orwell's book has such a special place in our hearts: it's helped us—not in some remote way, but very personally—and we're grateful to it.

I remember very clearly when I first encountered the book. It was, typically, in high school, and it was extremely useful to me. I remember being, at first blush, put off by the eventual crudity of O'Brien; it seemed wrong for the character. Why would anyone as elegant as O'Brien—so cerebral—descend in the end to such harsh, physical torture? All those theories, all those grand abstractions, even that high, wry humor—could it all coexist so intimately with coarse brutality? Could a thug be so refined? Orwell showed my high school self

that this might indeed be so. It has been, through the years, a treasured lesson and has helped me considerably in dealing with numbers of similarly refined thugs.

A new film version of Orwell's book has come out, written and directed by Michael Radford. It was unfortunate enough to come out just a teensy bit too late to premier in the year of its title (by God, aren't we all vastly relieved to have made it through 1984 without someone stuffing a wire basket full of rats over our faces?), and I'll bet there's quite a story behind that bit of bad luck; but the movie itself turns out to be quite good.

The cast is dandy throughout and particularly fortunate in its leads. John Hurt is just right as Orwell's miserable, malnourished, unhealthy hero; Suzanna Hamilton is fine as his tricky mistress, nicely capturing the author's rather ambivalent view of her; and Richard Burton is absolutely super as O'Brien, once again making one sigh for what he might have done had he ... and so on and so on. Anyhow,

he's great.

The ghastly, dismal, godawful world of 1984 is visualized brilliantly. It's a gloomy, dirty, malfunctioning mess. Radford has done absolutely the right thing, making sure that the fantasy of the future stays firmly rooted in Orwell's own 1940s.

The props—telephones, labels, architectural styles, clothing—are all the sort of stuff you would have logically extrapolated from that period. 1984 is very much a period piece, thank heaven, and should not be violated by updating; it would be a sorry blunder to have equipment smacking of our present computer era functioning in the Ministry of Truth. Actually, if I have a complaint along those lines, I think it's possible that the television equipment shown in the film should have even a little more old-timey.

I may be wrong on that, and I'm certainly willing to stand corrected (truth be told, tv might have been snappier than I think it was back then), since the very best aspect of the movie is its excellent sense of period,

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"The start of a cute idea."  
Peter Lapis and one of the title creatures in *Ghoulies*.

the high point being, perhaps, the cruddy VICTORY labels on everything from gin to smokes to crackers. They are wonderfully tacky and cheap-looking, and you can feel the ink of their dumb colors coming off the sleazy paper onto your fingers.

One nice running gag in the film is the way the characters carefully avoid reacting noticeably to the staggering ineptitude of their environment, since it wouldn't be polite and certainly might be dangerous. Nobody flinches if they're spattered in the cafeteria line, sticking doors are forced without comment, and malfunctioning elevators bypassed as if one really intended to go down via the staircase all along and had only paused on the landing for a little idle conversation.

Hurt is, of course, a past master of suffering, and he does not let us down here. He doesn't go quite as far as he did in *The Elephant Man*, but he does end looking quite a mess. His affair with Hamilton is lean and fierce, extremely sensual in a very desperate and despairing sort of way, and the aliveness of their passion is nicely contrasted with the deadness of everything else that's happening to them. Radford concentrates on the paleness of their flesh and the visible straining of their

tendons as they clutch at one another. Theirs is definitely no Southern California love affair.

Burton exploits the ravages of his real-life illness with all the skill you'd expect from an actor of his nerve and presence, and it is often quite agonizing to watch the sheer miserableness of his O'Brien. O'Brien's skill at torture comes from his own pain, of course, and his unshakeable drive to kill the soul in you comes from the emptiness in his own center; and Burton shows it all. The timing is marvelous; the slow, cruel way he lays a supposedly comforting hand on his victim's shoulder is something to see. His pauses as his dead eyes study his prey are bone-chilling. He really was very, very good, was Burton.

Unfortunately, although it does try, this 1984 movie has the same problem as any other 1984 movie: it simply isn't the book and therefore cannot do all the things a book can do. Still, it manages to get across many a subtle and insightful Orwellian observation, and it is filled with grisly and ironic jabs at ghastly political truths. All across the board, I give Mr. Radford's film the palm for its triumphs over previous efforts to bring this marvelous satire to the screen.

On a somewhat lower cinematic level we have *Ghoulies*, an odd little offering presently touring the nabes, which has a poster showing a green, fanged monster rearing out of a toilet, together with the caption: "They'll get you in the end!"

Okay, thought I, some low, scatological comedy never hurt anybody, or at least nobody that personally complained to me. So I went in expecting a few cheap laughs and like that there. But *Ghoulies* was only kidding, folks; it tries to be a serious horror movie.

In fact, it plays with something I'd very much like to see somebody competent take a whack at—traditional magic, with stuff borrowed from the real grimoires—but though the folks who cranked it out seem to be a reasonably well-meaning bunch, I'm afraid they've taken the terrible risks of using Solomonian circles and Crowleyian chants all for nothing. (You poor fools, didn't you know what you were doing?!?) There's a couple of nice dwarves (hi there!), and somebody had the start of a cute idea somewhere, but it just doesn't come together. See it only if you're a real completist or are writing this column.

And we end with *Zombie Island Massacre* (I guess you've figured out by now that pickin's were pretty lean in the filmic south forty, readers), which again has a poster indicating that the thing is going to be a kind of romp. But though it does start out with the suggestion that just maybe something cute's going to occur, since it has a bunch of singularly loathsome tourists being smirked into a bus by a fast-talking Jamaican, it soon degenerates into a particularly uninteresting splatter epic.

*Zombie* is distinguished, though, by the presence of Rita Jenrette, the Abscam congressman's wife turned *Playboy* vamp, and without doubt the most interesting scene in the movie is one wherein she and a fellow get to fooling around and various pink things belonging to Ms. Jenrette appear. Still, she fails to save the project. Actually, the movie is interesting in a kind of historical way, in that its plot structure is really very much like the old gothics, wherein numerous supernatural items would appear to occur, but then the bulk of them would be cleared away by perfectly natural if roughish explanations, save for one or two spooky but unpinpointed items left unexplained.

Just thought I'd point that out. ☞

# I Hear You Callin' CTHULHU

*Hot on the trail of Dagon, the shoggoths, and other Lovecraftian horrors,  
the noted cartoonist (and intrepid TZ columnist)  
finds himself drawn into a labyrinth  
of secret caverns, sinister intruders, tentacled monstrosities—  
and a terrifying thing called the Insanity Table.*

by GAHAN WILSON



Has it ever furtively crossed your mind, while reading H.P. Lovecraft, that someone as bright and clever as yourself might, with just a tiny bit of luck, have fared much better against that legendary author's monsters and dark forces than his heroes ever did?

What if, in the story "The Call of Cthulhu," you were at the helm of the good ship *Emma* instead of Captain Gustaf Johansen? Might you not have hit the tentacled monstrosity that rose from the sea a little squarer amidships, and thus possibly prevented its cellular reformation? And in "The Colour Out of Space", couldn't a couple of astute tips from you have put the investigators from Miskatonic University on the right track that time they were snooping around Nahum Gardner's farm? And couldn't you have nipped "The Dunwich Horror" in the bud if only you'd had a little heart-to-heart talk with Lavinia Wheateley before she went to meet her demonic lover atop Sentinel Hill?

Well, now you can try your hand at all of the above. It's risky, of course, terribly risky. But you can try!

And have you ever wished you'd bought some gorgeous gold Innsmouthian jewelry from the retail office of the Marsh Refinery before the Feds closed it down back in February of 1928? Or that you'd had a chance to cart away a few armfuls of the mildewed, disintegrating books—including the abhorred *Necronomicon*—from the rear vestry room of the old Free-Will Church atop Providence's Federal Hill? Or snapped up Richard Upton Pickman's horrendous painting "Ghoul

Feeding" during its showing at the Boston Art Club?

Now, at last, such things are available. Acquiring them is dangerous—hideously dangerous. But you can get your hands on them all!

Of course, a number of you are skeptical, because you know that the objects and events I've mentioned never actually existed; they're found only in the hauntingly macabre fiction of Howard Phillips Lovecraft. So why this talk of you personally encountering the monsters furtively spoken of by Abdul Alhazred circa 730 A.D., or of you actually touching such things as a sentient metal cylinder with three curious sockets in its front, together with a label bearing the name Henry W. Akeley? You know such things could never, ever happen. Not to you.

Still you can't really be sure about anything these days, can you? Take Lovecraft himself, so endlessly self-critical, so private and shy. No one was surer than he that his tiny fame—minuscule, really, during his lifetime—would flicker out altogether on his death, leaving him totally forgotten. How gently he would chide anyone bold enough to hint that he might have at least a little posthumous fame!

And how do you suppose he'd react if his naughty necromantic wizard, Joseph Curwen, one of his more sinisterly convincing creations, craftily managed to steal HPL's essential salts from the Providence family plot and raise him from the dead so that he might observe his present worldwide fame? Why, the Old Gentleman would be astonished at such an impossibility!

Or course, he'd be delighted to see his writings in all those books, edition after edition, foreign and domestic—as what author wouldn't? But I'm afraid his tendency to side with the negative criticism of his work, and to politely belittle whatever praise he received—particularly that which compared him favorably to the greats of literature—would continue. Still, he might go so far as to rub his large chin and wonder at the enormous quantity of kindly comment.

Of course, when he got around to the film and radio versions of his stories, all but half a handful would more than confirm his worst, most cynical beliefs about American culture (save for ice cream) ever since we revolted against the British. Yet in a perverse sort of way (and let's face it, he did have his perverse sorts of

ways), all this would be sure to please him. Almost everybody likes to see his darkest suspicions realized.

It might take him a little time to get around to it, there being so much else to see, but there is one recent phenomenon, among all the things Lovecraftian, which I know, deep in my heart, he would enormously enjoy: the game that is the subject of this article.

I can see his eyes lighting up as he first comes across the lurid box containing the starter set. I can hear his high-pitched chuckle as he flips through the manuals, with their horrendous illustrations, and as he fondles the magical-looking plastic dice and pretty period figurines. But the vision which I treasure most of all is the expression of growing pleasure on his long, Easter-Island-image face when he comes across the game's "Sanity Table" and chews over the delightful awfulness of its implications.

Yes, Howard Phillips Lovecraft would have loved to play Call of Cthulhu!

My first clue that such a thing existed were reviews I came across in two esoteric magazines devoted to Lovecraft and his works: *Lovecraft Studies*, a very serious journal published by the Necronomicon Press and edited by the prolific and extremely astute S.T. Joshi, perhaps the one man in the world who could eventually convince the resurrected HPL that he's as good as he actually is; and *Crypt of Cthulhu*, a magazine lighter in tone and style than *Studies* (it describes itself as "A Pulp Thriller and Theological Journal"), but every bit as serious, deep down inside, and equally as valuable. It's edited and published by Robert M. Price, of whom more later.

The reviews reflected the overall mood of their magazines, the one in *Studies* giving a careful, accurate analysis of the game's structure, together with a complete listing of the equipment provided, and ending with a mild caveat concerning a possible tendency toward un-Lovecraftian physical violence; the one in *Crypt* (written by delighted fourteen-year-old) describing a personal encounter with the game. Both were extremely favorable, both critics had enjoyed the game immensely, and both convinced me that my life would be a hollow sham, until I could get my hands on a set of Call of Cthulhu.

Cthulhu is what is known as a role-playing game. I knew a tiny bit about such games, since I'd been in-

volved briefly in a project concerned with designing one, but I'd never actually played such a game, as the older ones frankly didn't interest me all that much. What I had seen of their worlds seemed very similar: one variant or another on a fantasy of medieval times, with characters no more than wandering clichés of swords and sorcery bearing as much primitive weaponry as they could tote, their lives an endless round of battle after violent battle, called "melees," with the outcomes determined—often very cleverly, I had to own—by a point tally based on dice rolls. I could see some appeal in being a knight errant or a wandering wizard, but there seemed a great monotony in those endless scufflings, and the odds against a character's survival seemed too high to be credible, even for the Dark Ages.

But Call of Cthulhu, now that sounded like quite another thing!

Thanks to a friendly clerk at Forbidden Planet, New York's largest science fiction shop (which was temporarily out of the game), I was able to contact its manufacturer, whose name and address the clerk wrote down for me on a slip of paper. I studied it as I wandered out of the shop and onto Broadway. The name had a singularly ominous ring, like one of those sinister outfits that are always giving 007 so much trouble.

"Chaosium!" I muttered aloud, and two surly men exchanging tightly folded bills for little plastic sacks of powder cast a sharp glance in my direction and furtively skulked away. They looked like denizens of Red Hook.

Chaosium is a California outfit. I telephoned them and was soon speaking to Sandy Petersen, the game's creator. Petersen sounded like a jolly soul, though as I talked with him I began to suspect that a good deal of his buoyancy arose from a genuine amusement at the idea of that vast, invulnerable monsters might even now be plotting to flatten our fragile civilization. He seemed completely undepressed at the possibility that humanity may be a passing and rather minor phenomenon upon the planet Earth. He sounded, in other words, like a true Lovecraftian.

Petersen told me that he first discovered the works of HPL in his father's library, where he came across the vintage Armed Forces paperback edition put out during World War II to let our boys know that there were

# I Hear You Callin' CTHULHU

more things threatening Mom and apple pie than just Tojo and the Nazis—there was Nyarlathotep and Hastur and dear old Father Dagon, just for starters. I sometimes wonder if G.I. Joe, after being exposed to the news about Innsmouth and Dunwich and such, ever had nagging doubts about the home front.

At first Petersen thought that creating a game using Lovecraft's creations—and set in Lovecraft's time (he lived from 1890 to 1937)—would be a snap; he would just take a few traditional characters and worlds, switch a few things around, change a white knight for a Miskatonic University professor, a dragon for a shoggoth, and there you are.

It was not to be quite that simple. He didn't want to use traditional sword-and-sorcery heroes, as the poor things simply lacked the necessary Lovecraftian complexities and subtle-

ties. To quote Robert E. Howard, the daddy of Conan, on these antediluvian braves: "They're simpler. You get them in a jam and no one expects you to wrack your brains inventing clever ways for them to extricate themselves. They're too stupid to do anything but cut themselves into the clear." A far cry from Lovecraft's dryly intellectual scientific investigators.

How about .45 automatics and the awkward way they tend to jam, or the difficulty of wiring up a little dynamite trap to be triggered with nitroglycerin? Hardly the same as splitting someone's cranium with a knout.

And consider the problems involved in giving your character the knack of driving Asenath Waite's powerful Packard in order to reach the cyclopean ruins near Chesuncook, or of digging up some bootleg hooch to loosen Zadok Allen's tongue about the Deep Ones, or of getting a credit rating

good enough to finance an expedition south of the Ross Sea to check out the plateau of Leng. And that hard-won copy of *De Vermis Mysteriis* by Ludvig Prinn isn't going to be of any use at all to a heroic investigator who can't read Latin.

Difficult as the task was, Petersen pulled it off—after considerable sweating of blood, to be sure—by creating a sizable list of skills from which a given character may choose, depending on his inclinations. A scholar may concentrate on areas such as Library Use, Archaeology, or Linguistics; a modern adventurer will find useful the skills listed as Pilot Aircraft, Track, Camouflage, and Dodge; and a skilled private investigator surely ought to choose Spot Hidden Object, Fast Talk, and Move Quietly. All those knacks are available, along with others as widely diverse as Astronomy, Pick Pocket, Debate, Swim, Make Maps, and Diagnose Disease.

Of course, the people thus created, these relatively civilized ladies and gentlemen of the 1920s and '30s, are going to behave quite differently from folk groping about in the Dark Ages. Your character will no longer be Sir Harvey the Red attempting to flatten the skulls of a pack of wooly bears, but rather Nathaniel Wingate Peaslee puzzling over why he went through a weird character-change for years on end, and whether it has any connection with those dreams he's been having about the Great Race of Yith; and the solutions to these problems will be radically different. You do not go after something like the god Azathoth with a broadsword; and if you find yourself standing your ground fighting shoggoths face-to-slime, you're in that position because you have been very stupid and are likely to be horribly and hideously destroyed. In the old-time role-playing games it wasn't a bad idea to barge your character right into the fray before he'd had a chance to properly buckle his shin-guards, lest he miss his chance to cleave in twain the Mongol bandit's skull; he'd probably survive, and the points he'd gain for a successful murder (one gains points in role-playing, as with life, for one's achievements) might help to balance the odds in his coming struggle against the enraged punas hovering into view. But when you're faced with an Elder God the size of Grand Central Station, you avoid rushing in, roaring and swinging your bloody cutlass, not only because it will almost certainly be

Great Cthulhu, newly awakened, adorns the back of a game box as he rises from his South Pacific island stronghold, R'lyeh.



fatal, but also because it would be a serious violation of Lovecraftian style, which requires that all participants first involve themselves in careful investigations, which eventually lead to an accumulation of awful revelations, which in turn lead to the dawning of even darker speculations, and then, only then, does all hell break loose (often in *italics*) and the fatalities commence.

In *Call of Cthulhu*, therefore, the adventurers all attempt to follow—talents vary—the essential structure of a typical Lovecraft story. If it is a shorter game, a single shocking revelation will signal the climax, which the characters may or may not survive (these brief descents into horror are known as “scenarios”) if it is a longer adventure (known as a “campaign”), the revelation will turn out to be only one of a series of, hopefully, increasingly horrendous encounters, until a highly satisfying grand finale either does or does not wipe out all present.

But the innovation of Petersen's which has a particularly authentic Lovecraftian ring, and which sets it in a class by itself so far as indoor sports are concerned, is that although the characters in *Cthulhu* are occasionally in great physical danger, they also find themselves in enormous psychic peril, now and then subjected to sights and understandings which may be horrible enough to drive them mad. A very important aspect of a character's constitution is his ability to handle these mental shocks, as reflected at any given moment by the current status of his Sanity Count. If he comes across the rat Brown Jenkin cgrily chewing his way through a student of non-Euclidean calculus, or suddenly grasps the hidden meaning of some tidbit such as *Phnglui mglw'nafh*, etc., etc., it may well push him over the edge.

Exactly how far over the edge he tumbles will be determined by a roll of the multifaceted dice. If he is lucky, he will suffer only from temporary insanity, and with a little rest he'll soon be back on his feet and right in his head. But if he is not so fortunate, he will be permanently insane. (The handy *Insanity Table* which offers a rich roster of disabilities, including Catatonia, Paranoia, and a heady selection of phobias, including my particular favorite, *Pantophobia*—fear of everything.) Of course, it is particularly awkward if you go crazy or even throw a minor fit at a time when you are also in physical danger. It is no help to be flopping around like a rag doll, rolling your



eyes and frothing helplessly at the mouth, while a party of green dog-faced ghouls is lumping across the wide-board authentic Colonial floor in your direction.

There is always hope, of course, or so they say. The character may consult a psychiatrist—a special table is available for just that purpose—or may be committed to an asylum, which may be the start of a whole new adventure. (To give you an idea of the game's straight-faced meticulousness, it is pointed out in the rule book that many Muslim-influenced countries had no such institutions available, since madmen were thought to have been touched by Allah and best left alone.)

The Chaosium folk arranged to send me the *Call of Cthulhu* starter set, together with several additional

scenarios and campaigns. I think it's possible I have not waited for anything to arrive with as much eager fretting since I sent off to Captain Midnight—or was it the Lone Ranger—for a secret decoder badge with concealed whistle. The badge turned out to be a great disappointment when it finally turned up months later, but such was definitely not the case with the much more speedily arriving *Cthulhu* game. And the more I looked it over, the better it got.

It came in a box with its title printed in creepy red letters and with a delightfully lurid picture of an old house in a driving storm and a huge green tentacle sneaking out of a graveyard toward some unsuspecting but very nervous people who were obviously doomed.



# I Hear You Callin' CTHULHU



*Cthulhu figurines from Grenadier Models: (l. to r.) Policeman, female adventurer, press photographer, and "muscle"; (below) flapper, thug, and old professor.*



Inside the box were the gorgeous and mystical-looking dice; the rule book; a manual on basic role-playing; a jim-dandy *Sourcebook for the 1920's* with the floor plan of a zeppelin on its cover; a page of silhouette character figures one could make stand up without having to glue pennies on their bottoms; and a Lovecraftian map of the world showing—at last!—the locations of the city of the Great Ones, R'lyeh, and the Plateau of Leng (though this final item bears a question mark).

The tone of the rule book is set as early as Chapter Two, "Creating the Investigator," in a table entitled "Skills Available for the Occupation Types." It lists Professor, Parapsychologist, Journalist, Author, Antiquarian, etc., but nary a barbarian or serf. What fun to battle the forces of evil as a wealthy man- or woman-about-town (Hi there, Lamont and Margo!), a speakeasy gangster or moll, an undercover federal agent, or any type at all who'd fit feasibly into the Roaring Twenties, including whichever historical character or the era you'd enjoy being, such as Ernest Hemingway, Annie Besant, Albert Einstein, Emma Goldman, or

Sigmund Freud, all of whom have their basic bios in the sourcebook. Sound snappier than being a varlet or a knave? Twenty-three skiddoo, kiddo!

And of course, by setting your adventure in the Lovecraftian era, you could have your intrepid heroes hear about the thing that that Charles Lindbergh spotted on his cross-Atlantic flight, or what was really behind the 1929 stock market crash, or why the British steamer *Tukarum* sank off Bombay in 1927 with 128 persons aboard. It's all there to pick and choose from.

There is a dizzying array of gods taken from HPL's canon, and from the works of such friends and disciples as Robert Bloch and Clark Ashton Smith: Fire vampires, Flying Polyyps, and Formless Spawn of Tsathogqua—these emerge from a casual run through the F's and they are lovingly detailed as to their Strength, Size, Dexterity, Spells Employed, and so on, together with homey details of their appearance, cult, and favorite techniques of slaughter. We find, for example, that only impaling weapons will penetrate the scaly hide of Yig, the Father of Ser-

pents; that they'll do so only on a lucky roll of the dice; and that such weapons will soon disintegrate in the venom of Yig's blood.

Chapter Six lists an enormous variety of magical spells, with detailed instructions on their uses and solemn warnings on their dangers. In Lovecraft's actual stories, such spells were mostly just implied; one never does quite manage to hear the incantations Dr. Armitage recited, nor clearly see the rhythmic gestures he made, in order to blow up Yog-Sothoth's son at the end of "The Dunwich Horror." (There is one notable exception, though: the formulae for raising and recollapsing the salty dead in "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward.") But if you're personally involved in battling the forces of chaos—and in this game you certainly are—it behooves you to have as much knowledge on the subject as possible. One tip the manual offers is that you can increase your Power Points, the tally of your basic magical ability, by trading in your Sanity Points. It's very expensive—ten SAN for one POW—but who ever met a wizard who wasn't a little odd?

You need not make up your own scenarios and campaigns; a small industry has sprung up to produce them, mostly at Chaosium, but also at firms such as Grenadier and TOME (Theater Of the Mind Enterprises). They come complete and ready to use, bound up in a magazine format with inspringly lurid covers and gruesome interior illustrations, packed with cryptic maps, letters scrawled in spidery hands, Egyptian railroad schedules, yellowed newspaper clippings, and other clues with which game-leaders may guide or misguide their charges through a variety of horrendous adventures. My guess

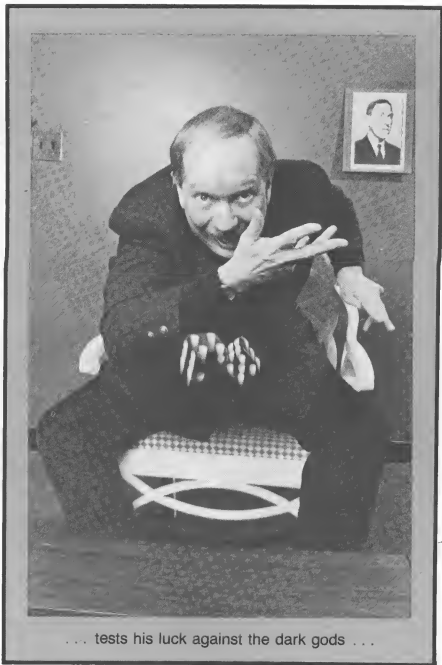
is that they will in time become collectors' items and that pursuers of Lovecraftiana will vie with one another for increasingly scarce copies of *Shadows of Yog-Sothoth*, *The Arkham Evil*, *Curse of the Cthonians*, *The Horrible Secret of Monhagan Island*, *Pursuit to Kadath*, and *The Asylum*, this last bearing a marvelous cover showing a shoggoth nastily spinning a victim at the ends of its tentacles. And now, for our French-speaking friends, there is *L'Appel de Cthulhu*, *Les Fungi de Yugoth*, and *La Malediction des Chthoniens*, with, one imagines, a German and Japanese edition in the works.

All this was very well in theory. But having learned by heart some simple rudiments of the sport—essential submachine gun technique; a smattering of 1920s expenses (a deluxe meal on a train cost \$1.50, ten-inch crucifix two dollars); speeds (a large dirigible cruises at five to ten knots); and how many Sanity Points it costs you take peek at Nyarlathotep in any one of his 999 nonhuman forms (a possible 100 points, which is serious, since the maximum number it's possible for any character to have is 99)—I was eager to experience the thing itself. But how? There were no overt players in my circle. (God knows how many covert ones they may be.) Where should I go for succor?

It turned out to be frighteningly easy to contact the invisible web of Call of Cthulhu players. After a tiny pluck or two at its outer strands, I soon began receiving mysterious phone calls and furtive notes, and before you could cry "Ia! Ia! Shub-Niggurath!" I was stumbling from one Cthulhu den to the next.

I've selected three contrasting samples from these nights of insane debauchery and unholy revelry in order to give you some idea of the range available. The first was put together by professionals, and was in fact an actual test run of a scenario planned for publication. The second was more on the down-home side: folksy, if not actually raucous. The third was run and played by hard-core aficionados in the gaming den of a science fiction convention.

Number one was held at the quiet Philadelphia suburban home of Andrew Chernak, president of Grenadier Models. Chernak is a soft-spoken, respectable-looking man who got into model-making when, as an innocent child, he became fascinated with those tiny dinosaurs available in



museum shops. I imagine his neighbors would probably be shocked to learn what he now and then gets up to on a dark evening (Call of Cthulhu should always be played in an open-ended mood at night, by the way), so let's hope none of them are *Twilight Zone* readers. I'd been introduced to Grenadier by a little slip of paper in the original game kit announcing that two sets of specially designed characters were available by mail: ten Lovecraftian monsters and twelve appropriate adventurers. I got the lot as soon as I could and fell in love with them the instant they tumbled out of their boxes.

The tallest monster in the set, a representative of the Great Race from "The Shadow Out of Time," stands a fraction under two and a half inches,

from the viscous layer at its base to the flowerlike toppings on its head; and though I'll concede that this makes it something like nineteen feet, ten and a half inches shorter than the original, it's still plenty impressive. My other particular favorites are the Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath, with its squirming, wormy tentacles; the multi-clawed Mi-Go; and the loathsomely bubbling shoggoth.

For sheer, unadulterated lovability, however, the adventurers are unbeatable. They're all decked out in period outfits: cloche hats, spats, pith helmets, and, on the more aggressive side (with Yog-Sothoth snuffing around, you're got to be ready), Thompson submachine guns, dainty pearl-handled revolvers, and what looks like a pretty mean elephant gun. The one which has



Another gruesome crew from Grenadier: (top) Byahkee, Great Race of Yith, Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath, Hound of Tindalos; (bottom) ghoul, Deep One, night gaunt, shoggoth, Mi-Go, and Serpent Man.

a special place in my heart, though, is a dear old balding professor dressed in tweeds, carrying a large book under one arm (obviously the *Necronomicon*) and, with the other, holding aloft a bull's eye lantern as he peers, just a tiny bit apprehensively at ... what? Only a throw of the multifaceted dice can tell.

On my trip to Philadelphia to play my first game, I had a chance to see the Grenadier factory, located a short drive from Chernak's home. The factory is a good-sized spread; everything from start to finish is done right there. The figurines are designed by Chernak and John Dennett (Dennett does the monsters, Chernak the adventurers), and copies of them are arranged like the spokes of a wheel in a circular mold, which is spun fiercely so that centrifugal force can squirt molten metal into every tiny crevice. Then the figures are stored on endless shelves alongside boxes full of tiny skeletons,

gnomes, ogres, unholy altars, space creatures of every description, and some regular soldiers—doubtless confused in this strange company—left over from the early days before Grenadier abandoned a military regimen for the wilder life of fantasy role-playing. In the office area I was introduced to Gary Pilkington, the company's adventure designer, and final plans were cleared with him for the evening's game—a necessary step, since Pilkington was to be its "keeper." No game could be played without a keeper; he is its director, producer, stage manager—unless he makes use of one of the prefabricated scenarios or adventures—its author. The keeper sets the mood, determines the pacing, and lays down the ground rules; whether it works or not depends upon his skills.

The game was held in Chernak's dining room with the players seated around the table, the opening mood hovering somewhere between a seance

and an all-night poker session. There were potato chips and other snacks at the ready (snacking and Cthulhery seem to be related addictions), drinks of choice at hand, and, before the keeper, several tidily arranged little piles of paper, a glittering heap of dice, and a large folded sheet of squared-off material with a promising map drawn on it.

Our character charts were handed to us, already named and "pre-generated." It is fun, and instructive, to use the dice to create a character oneself, seeing him get good breaks here and bad breaks there, but keepers often prefer to create the cast according to their own dark plans. We were solemnly informed that we had all been hired to visit an isolated cottage in Maine in order to investigate the disappearance, with singularly sinister overtones, of an eccentric recluse. After the keeper gave us the details and background of our situation,

reading from notes and by passing out simulated newspaper clippings, and letters for us to study we proceeded to question him, both as ourselves and as the characters we'd been assigned to play; and before we knew it we found ourselves whispering—really whispering, mind, not pretending—because we had heard something scuffling outside the cottage, in the dark of the Maine woods (I forget whether it was before or after we came across those puzzling stains in the upstairs room), and we didn't want it to know where we were, because we were all pretty sure it was one of H.P. Lovecraft's Mi-Go!

Eventually, the Mi-Go—for that's what they were, all right—did spot us, as they will tend to do, and things got pretty hectic. (For God's sake, Thurber, don't ask me to tell you what happened to that poor devil of a reporter from *Bizarre Tales*!) All of it was great, and I loved every minute, but for me the first lapsing into whispers was the magic moment, my initiation into the extraordinary reality of the game. I had known all along that it would be fun, but up until then I had thought it would just be pretend.

It's not only the events that take place and the things you run into that become real; it's the characters themselves who, if properly introduced, and presented with as much care as the environment on which they'll function, take on a really astonishing fullness and independence.

I can illustrate this phenomenon with a nicely vivid moment in the next game I played, one I had been very kindly invited to participate in by Robert Price, the editor of *Crypt of Cthulhu*, who met me at Forbidden Planet. Though he teaches religion at Montclair State College and is a contributor to a variety of perfectly legitimate theological periodicals, Price's dark, compact look and glittering, intelligent eyes give him a decidedly piratical air; one wonders, sometimes, just what he's got his mind on. After he introduced me to Marc Cerasni and Charles Hoffman—two serious, published scholars of Robert E. Howard—and a small, rather sinister woman with the nom de plume of Donna Death, who writes a regular column of advice in *Crypt* servicing the strange and perverted amongst its readership, we all plunged below ground into the subway and took the IRT to Brooklyn Heights. I learned that the game was to be held in the apartment of Cerasni and Hoffman,



... reads his fate in the faces of the dice ...

which is located, most appropriately, only a short stroll's distance from the site of Lovecraft's last New York abode at 169 Clinton Street.

The area is still very much as HPL described it—a bleakish place, not at all a winner in the societal lottery—but it has, withal, a kind of old-time graciousness in its large buildings with their big, broad yards, even if most of those yards are now filled in with concrete. Picking up a couple of armfuls of edibles at an Italian deli while a bandaged man glowered at us from an upstairs window across the street, we wandered through an involved maze of walkways, crossing over tracks, and eventually settled down in the apartment, a comfortable, booky place. As we glanced over our character sheets (I was to be one Walter Neville, a grad-

uate of Cambridge—a man skilled in, among other things, First Aid and the ability to hide), Hoffman quietly slipped on some music from *Halloween II*. He continued to provide a similarly atmospheric background throughout. (I highly recommend the use of music—and, even better, the judicious use of startling sound effects!)

This particular game's main prop was a lovingly hand-drawn map showing the upper tunnels of a mine. Our little Grenadier figurines were brought very much into play, each of us scrupulously moving the one representing our character (my own was a snappy chap wearing a monocle, boutonniere, and spats) so that it always stood just where it should be according to the current action of the adventure.

The essential situation was less

# I Hear You Callin' CTHULHU

complex than the one in Philadelphia; there was a very little literary preamble, and no use at all of nonplaying characters (i.e., those impersonated by the keeper). We simply entered the mine, bold investigators all, in order to delve into rumors of dangerous-sounding Cthulhoid happenings. The simple exploration of the environment itself—our reactions to the discovery of strange side tunnels containing oddly active relics, and our eventual stumbling across an ancient, ominous cave—constituted the scenario.

Once again the magic of the thing worked, and by degrees the little map drawn with black and blood-red felt-tip pens turned into an actual place. Soon it was not a question of tiny metal figures being moved along a paper surface; it was ourselves, interacting, stumbling over a rough, uneven floor of stone, peering into the ancient darkness only partially lit by our faltering lanterns. The shouts of playing

kids coming through the windows that Brooklyn summer night faded away, and there was only the patient drip of lime water from stalactites and our echoing shouts to one another at some new, frightening discovery. It's true; it's true.

And we were, all of us, brave or wise or both. There tends to be a division of labor and abilities among the characters in Call of Cthulhu. There is a need for intrepid heroes, for heroines with good wind and strength and considerable agility, but there is also a requirement for grave scholars, perhaps well along in years and not so spry, and even for wizards who, while of good heart, may be just a shade neurotic—or even just this side of certifiable—due to the horrendously disturbing but virtually essential knowledge they have gained through fear-some experience and research. We became those people.

In real life Cerasini is, for example,

a gentle, soft-spoken person, dreamy and contemplative, but in this game of Cthulhu his character was a classic private detective, trenchcoated and tough, thoughtful only in a rough-hewn sort of way; and so when the moment of truth arrived in the shape of an enormous Deep One that rose towering and unexpected from a noxious pool, threatening to visit upon Cerasini's lovely female companion a singularly horrible death with its huge webbed, slimy claws, he didn't so much as hesitate: he coolly told the girl to stand aside, stepped right up to the monster, drawing his .45 automatic as he did so—never mind the enormous odds against such a toy stopping the brute—and gunned the damned thing down. I swear to you I've never seen Robert Mitchum himself do that sort of thing better.

The third game, played at a science fiction convention, was manned by dedicated players and was Serious Business. The keeper, a fellow named Tim Blank who wore a fedora of a different color each time I saw him, rose to the occasion by producing a truly spectacular adventure.

It began quietly enough in Boston with a complicated search involving interviews with varying cooperative individuals and dusty burrowings through public records. Our goal was to uncover information about a recently slain necromancer who happened to be the father of one of the adventurers. Following the multilayered approach highly approved of by the game's creators, revelation followed revelation, and it soon became clear that even larger evils than first suspected were afoot—that the sorcerous Bostonian had ended up being not entirely human, and that his son was likely to suffer a similar fate unless a highly potent but terribly dangerous magical ceremony was intoned during an upcoming planetary conjunction.

Fortunately it turned out that I myself had come across a copy of the *Liber Ivonis* (Table 6.A: "Books of the Cthulhu Mythos"), a worm-gnawed volume which contained the very spell we needed ("Eanish Avatar"); I had both read it (my Latin was 75%) and mastered it—with some loss of sanity, to be sure, but not as much as the keeper had hoped. I saw his sideward glance of disappointment when the dice cost me only two SAN points! (All characters who go entirely insane become property of the keeper, by the way.) And while I was obviously a lit-

A "proto-shoggoth" and its luckless victim, from the *Cthulhu* game book "The Asylum & Other Tales." Left: dice for *Cthulhu* gamesmen.



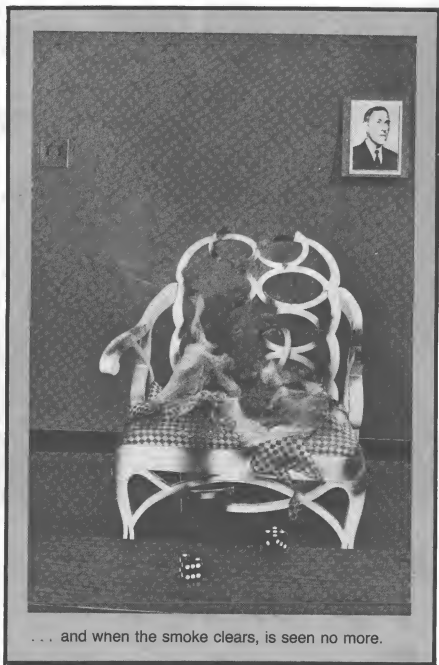
tle cracked, I was up to chanting the spell and was well on my way to completing it, in spite of the cliffside's bursting open and those damnable claws and tentacles flailing and groping against the walls and windows of that isolated house. But then Thorndike—I never did trust him!—unexpectedly went through an unholy transformation and clawed me down from eleven to three Hit Points, which effectively stopped my chanting; but, by God, I did think before I died to shriek out to Drummond to cut his throat, to kill himself with that ghastly knife he'd used to kill his hellish father—and so that monstrous, crawling abomination didn't get him after all!

I know it seems hard to believe that all this happened on a quiet Sunday morning at a motor inn in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, but it did, and I have witnesses.

God knows what happens when you become involved in one of the longer campaigns. Chaosium has a brand new boxed set out, *Masks of Nyarlathotep*, which consists of no less than five complete scenarios (awful things happen in New York, London, Cairo, Kenya, and Shanghai) which link to form an adventure of enough complexity, I imagine, to risk a permanent drift from the dimensions we know to the spaces between them. And by the time one has fought one's way through to the Yangtze Delta, I can see as how one's real-life name and statistics might tend to get a little foggy. In fact, I can even imagine somebody's getting involved enough to expire simultaneously with his character.

Ah, but wiser heads say you're not supposed to get all that attached to characters, since they do tend to get killed or go hopelessly mad while involved in Cthulhu Mythic doings—or, as Lovecraft himself described it (and much more fetchingly, I've always thought), a Yog-So-hothery. Besides, it might not be playing the game on a properly cosmic level.

But suppose you do temporarily become the bold archaeologist who defies his colleagues' warnings and the curse carved in dusty hieroglyphics; or the society beauty who is intrigued by something strange she's come across in her chic astrologer's study; or the down-and-out adventurer on a park bench who finds himself staring at an intriguing but oddly dangerous-sounding ad in the Help Wanted section of his ragged paper? What's wrong with that?



... and when the smoke clears, is seen no more.

And suppose one thing leads to another, and that you're curious enough, and brave enough, to tag along. And suppose that you do eventually come across something so truly awesome, so totally beyond the realm of humanity's ordinary experience, that merely to learn of its existence may mean the end of you?

Well, then, you'd be right up there with the venerable Elihu Whipple, stumbling upon compressed centuries of horror in the basement of "The Shunned House," wouldn't you? Or the equal of characters such as Danforth, chanting the familiar stations of the Boston-Cambridge tunnel, in order to avoid having his mind come apart in "At the Mountains of Madness." In short, you'd be in with a pretty classy lot, since it's hard to find a braver,

bolder batch of heroes than those in the pages of Howard Phillips Lovecraft's sagas. They risked both their bodies and their minds by adventuring with nothing less than gods!

Sometimes they lost, sometimes they won, sometimes it's hard to tell. But they had a hell of a run for it, and saw things that most folk never even dream of. Searchers after horror haunt strange, far places; for them are the catacombs of Ptolemais and the carved mausolea of the nightmare countries. So let us climb the moonlit towers of ruined Rhine castles, you and I, and falter down black cobwebbed steps; let us linger around sinister monoliths and ride with ghouls in the night wind, and play by day beneath the Pyramid.

Is it my roll with the multifaced dice, or is it yours? 17



# Tip of the Scorpion

You've met the Triffids and the Body-Snatcher Pods. Now prepare to harvest the strangest plant of all.

by STEVEN POPKES

**T**he agricultural agent's name was Wilson, Something Wilson. Joe Santista couldn't remember what his first name was. Didn't matter. Joe was having too much fun with him to break it up by asking. Billy, Joe's wife, watched the desert through the window.

"Don't you even have a phone? Something we could use to communicate with you?" Wilson loosened his collar. He was pale and wet looking, a pudgy man from Oregon or Washington or somewhere else pale and wet.

"Nope." Joe smiled. "Nobody left around to call. Telephone lines fell down and never got put back up. Used to have one, though." Joe's smile showed crooked teeth under an Indian hook nose. His skin was the color of tea, and Joe knew the man couldn't tell whether that was from his lineage or from the desert sun."

Wilson sweated. "But Mister Santista, it's two hundred miles from here to Albuquerque. You must have some way of talking to people. To order supplies. To get mail."

"Used to go into Flagstaff once a month. Got the mail then, too. No one there, now. Just a few drifters. For supplies," he waved toward the helicopter and grinned, "I got you boys. Got rattlesnake bit two years ago. Took care of it ourselves. You don't worry about me and Billy. We been here thirty years and we'll be here thirty more."

Illustration by John Winter Holl

Wilson looked at him, down at the floor and around the adobe house, sighed, seemed to struggle against something inside himself. "Okay. You have to be on your own out here, I guess. Do you understand the agreement?"

Joe understood getting the subsidy meant keeping his land. The drought had ruined him and he owed on his taxes. "I grow the stuff and sell the fruit to you."

"Sej, Mister Santista. Sej. The fruit is secondary. The main purpose of the sej is to anchor the land, to prevent New Mexico and Arizona from becoming another Oklahoma dust bowl. Sej isn't really a plant at all, but a rotifer—an animal—in a symbiotic relationship with a fungus. It lives on heat." He looked at Joe, broke off. "Never mind. We want you to grow the sej."

Joe listened to him carefully. Whenever anyone talked about the drought he listened carefully. The drought had turned the Colorado River into a mud stream, dried up Flagstaff and Needles into withered hulks of burnt out buildings. It had dried up his shallow well and killed his cattle. It would have taken his land but for this.

Wilson looked at him expectantly.

Joe thought about taxes. "I understand it okay."  
"Good."

It took the rest of the day for him and Wilson to deal with the government regulations and paperwork involved. Joe had never written so much at one time in his entire life. After a while, his own signature became strange to him. Wilson boarded the helicopter and flew away across the desert. He left behind him a thick government manual, *Sej Growing in the Desert Southwest*, twenty barrels of gasoline and a new well pump for the new deeper well. They were part of the bargain.

They worked at night with the moon to help them. It was too hot during the day. The land was baked flat and beaten by the sun. Joe watched it at sunset and sunrise, a huge, anemic ball of fire. Only the creosote was still alive and if Wilson could be believed, it would die soon. Joe had a special prayer of damnation for the sun.

First, they dug the irrigation ditches, then they planted the sej. They used the tractor for both. "Sej [Selected Eunicoccus Joaquin]", said the manual, was a variation or hybrid or something—the manual was not very clear—between rotifers and Scorpion's Tail. The seeds were hard, dry kernels about the size of Joe's thumb.

Billy helped him plant by marking turns in the field, then rode with him. The old tractor barely made it. A new Army attachment on the planter fired the kernels into the ground with a .22 shell. The kernels rang like steel bells.

They had to cover the ditches with plastic sheets. The plastic was sharp. Joe slipped on it just

as they finished. It sliced cleanly through Joe's jeans and skin. He stood panting and bleeding into the soil, onto the newly planted sej. It was just too damn hot. Billy led him into the house. She sprinkled penicillin over the wound and stitched the edges together. "You watch yourself, Joe. There ain't a hospital in Flagstaff no more."

He smiled at Billy and laughed. "There ain't no Flagstaff no more. Watch your own self, old woman. I'll be all right."

The ditches filled and trickles of water moved into the desert.

The sej sprouted overnight.

They walked through the field in the sunset light looking at the young shoots. The sej was dust black and tubular like asparagus. A mirrorlike tip glittered in the dimness.

Billy looked uneasy. "Don't look right, Joe. Not like a plant at all."

Joe bent over one and touched one. He felt a mild electrical shock. "Looks just like the pictures in the book. Besides, don't it say this stuff ain't a plant anyhow? Scorpion's Tail," he muttered, "maybe the tip's the stinger?"

"Pictures weren't clear enough to show the tip. It just don't look right. Don't feel right."

"What the hell do you know, anyway?" Joe looked dubiously at the sprouts. "Dumb old woman."

In two weeks, the sej was a foot high and each plant had two broad leaves, half black and half chrome. The electrical shock from them was no longer mild but painful.

"You watch yourself in the field, Joe," said Billy quietly. "The book didn't say nothing about electricity."

"Did too. It said it made some from heat. Just nothing about any shocks." Joe scratched the stubble on his face. "Maybe the government boys didn't know. Don't matter. We know about it now." He was strangely eager, excited about farming for the first time.

Billy looked up at him narrowly. "Still, you watch yourself."

"Go along with you, old woman. I have to ..." he looked in the manual. "Curry the ground out around the sprouts." Under the full moon, he raked and broke the sej's new earth.

A month passed and the sej was man high. They murmured in the quiet.

"Joe, they talking to one another."

"You a crazy old woman. That's the wind." He listened to the sound. It was like whispered singing.

She drew herself up and anger rippled in her voice. "I ain't crazy." She turned away from him. "And I ain't goin' into the fields no more. You go by yourself."



# Tip of the Scorpion

The sej sang to them both.

He walked in the field, listening to the sej move. The rustling of their growth sounded like muffled chimes. He was careful not to touch them but one brushed against him. He jerked back and braced for the shock. The pain did not come. Instead, he felt a pleasant tingling.

Tentatively, he touched the plant again. The tingling was stronger, euphoric. He took a deep breath and grasped the stem firmly, and had an orgasm.

Dreamily, he looked around at the sej, glittering and dark. "Nice," he said softly. He touched the stem again and had another.

The leaves brushed against him as he ran back to the house, each one giving him a shiver or a tingle of delight, adding to one another until he had a third orgasm at the field's edge.

"Billy?" he called weakly. He could get used to this.

She came out. "Joe? You all flushed."

"Yeah." He smiled. "The sej don't shock you anymore. They—do something different."

She looked suspicious. "Yeah? What?"

"It's hard to explain." He led her up to a stem near the edge of the field. "Grab it."

"You're the one who's crazy."

"No," he shook his head, "I'm not. Trust me. Just grab it."

Billy looked at him a long while, then hesitantly grabbed the sej. She screamed as her hand began to smoke.

Joe wanted to pull her away but her hand would not unclench. He pried her fingers loose, all while the sej touched him erotically. Billy fell to the ground sobbing.

Joe bandaged her hand as best he could. It was badly burned and two fingers were charred. When he had finished and Billy was sleeping in a morphine dream, he stepped outside and listened to them. In the moonlight, their silver and ebony leaves seemed faceted. He wanted nothing more than to run naked through them.

"What do you want? Why'd you burn her hand, anyway?" he called to them. They only sang. He shook his head and curried the ground near the edge of the field, avoiding looking at the sej. They seemed to reach toward him.

Billy lost her hand.

The burns wouldn't heal and became gangrenous. Joe gave her morphine again and, reading from the medical book, sliced through muscles and sinew and sawed through bone. She slept through it, her body cold.

He bound the stump and released the tourniquet. There was only a little seepage and he relaxed. Perhaps it would be all right.

She woke the next day, sat in the dim, afternoon heat and stared at the stump. "They shoulda' still had the hospital at Flagstaff," she said dully, "they shoulda'."

Joe leaned on the frame and looked outside. The sej looked more silver than black in the sunlight. "There should still be a Flagstaff. We always took care of ourselves before."

"I never got my hand burnt off before!" She sat up and stared at him.

Joe looked down.

She lay back down. "We gonna' burn the crop down tomorrow."

"No!"

"It burnt off my hand!"

Joe groped for words. "We can't. It's in the contract. We made a deal." She watched him. "Besides, it keeps the land for us. We gotta' at least get the crop in. Just to get some money together."

"It didn't burn your hand off."

Joe looked down.

"What did it do to you? Answer me ... Answer me!"

Joe swayed, trying to explain. "It was like, like a long while back, with you and me ..." His voice trailed off.

"Like you and me," she said slowly. "Christ. It's been a long time since that, hasn't it, Joe?" Billy sat on the edge of the bed and stood. Joe tried to help her but she shoved him away. The sej shone in the sun.

She leaned against the doorframe, holding the stump of her arm in her left hand. "Damn you. You ain't getting him," she shouted at the field. "Damn you!"

The sej glittered.

Now, Billy walked with him down to the field when he worked. She wouldn't enter the field, but stayed at the edge and waited. With her there, he didn't feel comfortable about touching the sej. The sounds seemed mostly the same, but when Billy walked near them, they seemed to hiss. Billy hissed back.

Some of the work had to be done inside the field, where the sej hid him from view. It made no difference; Joe could feel her presence.

The moon was new and dark and Joe had to work by flashlight. The sej were still only a little taller than he was, but they had thickened and roots shot sideways and down into the soil, sprouting new plants. The sej was spreading. This made Joe feel good. He didn't blame the sej for Billy's hand. It was like having a dog, he reasoned. The sej knew him, trusted him and responded with—in the way they did. They were part animals, weren't they? Billy hadn't been in the fields along with him and she had been scared of them. Dogs could smell fear. It seemed possible to him the sej could, too. Billy

"The book didn't tell about the electricity. It didn't say it'd burn off your hand. Or about the other, but nobody'd want to talk about that.

Would they? Would they?"

hated the sej now and the sej hated her back. It was simple.

**W**ilson came in a copter, spreading a cloud of dust a mile wide. He eased his pudgy, wet body out of the passenger section after giving the pilot a dirty look. Joe could see he wasn't too pleased.

"Howdy, Mister Wilson." Joe tried to shake his hand.

Wilson looked at the hand, then shook it. "You're sounding much happier than when we met last, Mister Santista."

Billy stuck out her right arm as if to shake Wilson's hand and the stump killed all conversation. The roar of the helicopter finally died away and they were left with the sounds of the desert.

"Something the sej left me," she said and pulled back her arm.

Wilson stared at the stump, shook himself. "Let's look at the sej, shall we?"

Joe took him around the field and showed him the new shoots and the way the sej was propagating along the field's edge. Wilson seemed pleased but kept looking back at the adobe house where Billy stood in the shade. Finally, Joe led him back to the house.

"He show you everything? He show you how good the stuff feels?" She held up the stump of her arm. "It felt right good. The book didn't tell about the electricity. It didn't say it'd burn off your hand. Or about the other, but nobody'd want to talk about that. Would they? *Would they?*"

Wilson stared at her. "Your hand—the sej work on electricity. They make it from ... heat. You burned your hand on them? Why did you—why weren't you careful?"

Billy pointed at Joe. "Ask him."

Wilson looked at Joe. Joe looked at the ground. Wilson turned back to Billy, his eyes suddenly opaque. "The federal government will make full restitution, of course. I'll investigate the manual when I get back to Riodosa." He watched the both of them. Joe suddenly felt as if Wilson knew about the sej. Though he hadn't expected it to burn Billy's hand, he knew what had happened. "We'll fly you to the hospital in Riodosa, of course. I'm sure Joe can handle things here."

Joe felt a hope inside him he hadn't known he had. To be alone with the sej ...

Billy shook her head, watching Joe. "I ain't goin' nowhere."

Wilson shrugged. "I'll have your supplies

unloaded."

Billy went inside the house. After a moment, Joe turned and watched the field.

The sej grew thicker closer to the irrigation ditches. He had to thread carefully through the boles and leaves to avoid them. Even so, he usually felt exhilarated and frustrated afterward. It was hard not to feel guilty when he came back out to Billy.

By flashlight, he loosened the soil around the new rootlings so they would spread. He inched his way through the sej until he was blocked by a thick collection of stems.

These were different. They were thicker than the other boles for one thing, and had no leaves. And they tapered to a rounded, clublike end. He looked more closely and saw they were arranged in a circle. Inside the circle was a woman.

Joe held his breath. She was sleeping, dark and silver as the sej, with thick, black hair. Her skin was dark except from her shoulders to just above her bottom. There, it was brilliant chrome. She looked as if she wore a dark body stocking cut low in the back. Still, she seemed naked.

As Joe watched, she stirred and looked blindly around. She turned to him and appeared to smile, but Joe couldn't really tell in the dimness. Stumbling slightly, she rose and drew him into the thicket. He shuddered as he touched the sej, touched her, trembled as she touched him. Suddenly, she was all over him. Each time she caressed him, each touch was a delight. When he entered her, it was everything again and more so. Four, five times he climaxed, then fell back spent until she stroked him.

She sat up, then stood. He saw now each of the boles was connected to her with a long root. She broke them and glided between the stalks and disappeared.

Joe stared after her, then staggered through the sej after her. She broke into the desert at the edge of the field and ran into the darkness.

She ran too quickly for Joe to follow. He finished rearranging his clothes and rejoined Billy at the end of the field closest to the house.

"Did you have fun out there?" she demanded.

"What—" he looked down.

"I heard you out there, rubbing against them.

"What about this?" She held out her stump toward him.

He watched it. He realized now she had not seen the woman, the Sej lady, only heard what had gone on. "Yes. I rubbed them. It felt—it shall not happen again. I am tired. I want to sleep."

"I'll burn 'em. I'll—"

"You will not." He left her and went into the house. Before he slept, he heard her shouting at the fields.

He found what he was looking for by accident, in the manual under trace elements:

# Tip of the Scorpion

...sometimes, in the event the soil does not have enough of some trace elements, notably vanadium or hafnium, sej will form a circle to grow a "deep drill." This occurs most often just prior to the seed generation of an entire field. Such a drill is essentially a single, oversized root capable of deep penetration of the soil. All of the contributing sej reap the resultant increase in these elements. The term "deep drill," however, is a misnomer. The structure is far more versatile and flexible than a single root. Because of the animal nature of sej, the drill can seem almost sentient in the way it obtains these elements.

There was more than that, he thought. More than just a mindless search for nutrition. There had been a touch, a caress with something reaching down into the foundation of his—self? soul? manhood? He wasn't sure. He was only sure it was true. And he could tell from the manual that the government men knew it, too. She may have carried away trace elements from him, but she had carried away a part of him as well. He understood now Wilson's expressions, his thinking. Wilson knew what would happen. They had all known. Joe imagined the first scientist who discovered the possibilities of sej. Had they been designed this way? Or had it been an accident? Joe thought it must have been an accident. Something created by men. Something he had shared. Perhaps she had run out and buried herself in the sand making seeds. She, the Sej Lady. Pieces of me and her out there.

A week passed, full of confusion and hope and guilt. Each night, Joe worked around and inside the field, loosening the dirt, harvesting the small dark fruit only now appearing. Each night, he avoided the fondlings and caresses of the sej. It was evident the sej wanted him, desired him—

He put the thoughts from his mind. Yet he looked for another sej circle and felt a strange waiting.

**A**nother week passed, and part of a third. Then, under the full moon, he found another circle.

She rose, more definite, more formed, more desirable than the last. Before he was lost in her, he thought he heard her whisper.

She ran from him and he watched her. He slowly replaced his clothes, thinking, feeling the afterglow.

"Hold it right there!" cried Billy.

Joe looked up in alarm, but Billy wasn't anywhere around. He heard a wail, lost and lonely from where the Sej Lady had gone. He broke through the sej toward her.

Billy was standing at the edge of the field with a

torch. The Sej Lady was before her, staring sightlessly at the flame, trembling. She backed into the sej.

"Got you! Got you right here." Billy forced the Sej Lady back into the field and heaped tumbleweeds along the edge. The Sej Lady wailed, a cry as far off and strange as a wolf. Joe shuddered.

Billy looked over to him, glared and spat. "Out of there. You and me have doin's later."

He walked behind Billy and saw now the face of the Sej Lady clearly by the light of the torch, made of hollows and ridges beautiful, pure and unhuman. He hid his face in his hands. Love? Was this love? He did not know her—her? By rights a thing. No. Her. She. A woman who made herself for him.

Billy laughed and set fire to the tumbleweeds. They blazed up, phoenix colors.

The Sej Lady cried out, stood and touched the flames, drew back. Touched them again, then stepped into them.

The fire danced around her, silhouetted her, spilled over her in an orange, red, and yellow wash. *She bathes*, he thought. Heat. She lives in fire and heat.

Billy backed away and the Sej Lady reached out to her. There was a blue white flash and an explosion threw Joe to the ground.

He lifted his head and looked to them. The Sej Lady stood over a blackened husk. He began to cry, not sure of the reason.

She came to him, tall, elegant, strength and grace in every movement. Her face was eyeless and mouthless and full of caring and love. She reached out to him.

He shook his head. Not yet.

She seemed to become smaller, sadder. He smiled at her. Soon, though.

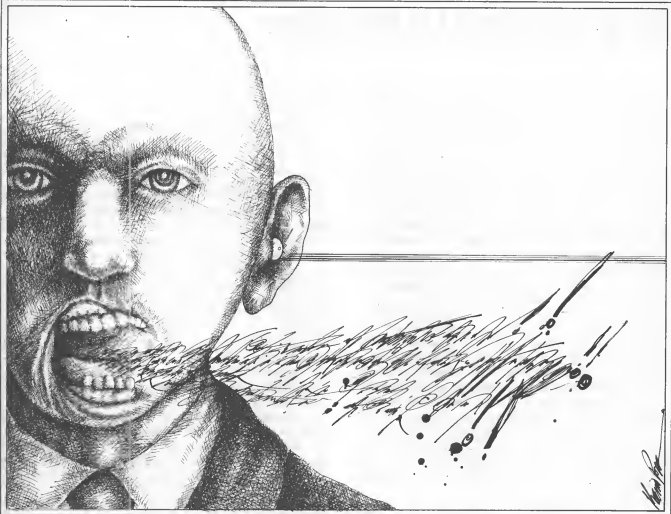
She straightened, looked down at him and left, walking into the desert.

He stood, nude, over the freshly turned dirt. Around him swayed and muttered and sang the sej. Before him was a hole. He eased what remained of Billy into it. Tears fell down his cheeks again; he was not aware of them. His body was painted half black, half white. He did not know any particular ritual, any particular religion, but this had seemed appropriate. Did Billy constitute a burnt offering? He wasn't sure.

It lightened in the east. Dawn was coming quickly.

He covered Billy over with dirt and returned to the house for a chair. Sitting square on the grave, he waited for her. Around him, the sej sang and he could almost understand words, gestures from the leaves. He tried to sing with them. Rootlings grew toward him. He was surrounded by a circle of sej. They touched his feet, his thighs in breathtaking, electric caresses. Foreplay.

She came to him soon after. 17



## AH, WHORESON CATERPILLARS! BACON-FED KNAVES!

*The Japs had come up with  
one hell of a great ©\*""©c&#®@†! machine.*

by JOHN SHEA

**G**randison was the first on his block to own a Mizumi 001 Vituperator—indeed, possibly the first one in the whole city. Given the secrecy with which the product had been developed and the jealousy with which it was guarded, it was a wonder that Grandison had one at all. I suspect that during his last business trip to Tokyo—in the fall of last year, to negotiate a much more prosaic deal—he had gotten wind of the prototype from one of his more intrepid and less respectable contacts there and expressed his interest in that most universal of languages: dollars. And then? Who knows. I can only state that the Vituperator is here, and is deadly.

It was raining lightly, more to dampen the spirits than the London Fogs. We had a few moments between appointments, so Grandison and I

stepped out of the office for a quick bite at the fast-food place. I could tell that Grandison had ulterior motives: his eyes glowed, and it wasn't just the foretaste of a filet-burger fabricated from a school of innocent minnows that had been slaughtered and reincarnated in a breaded block of unrecognizable substance. Then it dawned on me: that innocent-looking hearing-aid in his left ear. But Grandison, I knew, had never been hard of hearing.

I did not have long to wait. The line moved forward jerkily, leaving for a moment a slight gap between the guant man in the grey Hush Puppies and ourselves. From behind us came a phlegmy sputter: "Mooove it, man, I ain't got all day."

I indeed started to move—as the voice suggested—forward, all the while groping in my mind for a stinging response. The silence lasted but a moment or two. The Grandison spoke:

# AH, WHORES ON CATERPILLARS!

"Was that a request on your part, my good fellow, or did I hear an ass bray? Come to think of it, a braying ass would be Vivaldi in comparison ... But what do you know of music, except when you're farting with your friends in front of *Dukes of Hazard*. Engrossing, no doubt ... Speaking of gross, do you always dispense spittle so freely? I'd offer my handkerchief, but I'm afraid it hasn't been vaccinated ... Oh, that's nice. Your mouth hangs open so evocatively. I think, for instance, of a cesspool on a summer's day. Nice teeth there, too. My, I've never seen so many shades of yellow before ... Your face gives blotchy a bad name. Do you shave with a machete? I think you missed a spot there—your jugular ... That's it, Mr. Pithecanthropus, first one foot forward, then the other. Good, very good. Give him a sugar cube. Motor coordination without mind ... Have they finally discovered the corpse of Amelia Earhart, or did you forget your Ban Roll-On this morning? *Quick*: 1969. Mets win, your last shower ... It's nice to see that lobotomies are still in fashion ... No, please, scratch if you wish. The simple pleasures for the very simple. We're all ..."

I wish I had glanced at my watch. This tirade was so sudden that I barely had time to turn and face our hostile fellow customer before he had popped his eyes and staggered away in amazement and fear.

"A coffee and danish," said Grandison, quite mildly, approaching the counter where an insipid young woman in a blue cap waited. He raised an eyebrow in my direction. "Not bad, eh?"

When we were huddled across from each other at a tiny table, amid the din Grandison said, "Nice pacing, good articulation. All the phrases come through quickly enough. It's just a question of keeping up, of repeating them fast enough." He touched the Vituperator gently. How much it looked like a mere hearing-aid! The better to lull the lunkheads, I suppose. "But I'm not sure yet about tone control. Got a bit mixed up there, I think. Vivaldi and farting. Earhart and scratching ... And no doubt the diction was a bit elevated for that moron, but I think I can adjust it."

"So how's it work? Continuously?"

Not really, unless one specifies. For example, if you know you'll be in a crisis situation, like wading through the Hare Krishnas at the airport or attending a faculty cocktail party. There's two other hidden transistorized components to the thing: a sort of ultra-sensitive lead, like a stick-on disc, that records any increase in heartbeat and pulse, thus signaling a Potential, Confrontation Situation, or PCS, as Mizumi calls it, and a microphone that picks up your own preliminary remarks—the Contextualization, as it's called—and if the other person, or Vituperatee, responds, the 001 can adjust, go with the flow, so to speak. And if necessary, it can fall back on your basic vocabulary of abuse, regardless

of context."

"Must cost a pretty penny."

"Speaking of alliteration, that's definitely a big element with the 001. More memorable, I guess. Rolls off the ..."

Grandison did not get a chance to finish. He had been holding his cup a few inches below his mouth, allowing the aroma to fill his nostrils. Suddenly, a fat woman lugging a shopping bag that rattled ominously lurched by, knocking his arm aside. The cup toppled, the coffee splashed, Grandison's wing-tips were drowned.

"Huh?" Then she lurched on.

"Madame...?" His voice was neutral. "Have you nothing more to say...? Shall I rephrase the question? Or is there too much wax in your ears anyway...? You abecedarian ambulator! You bovine bustler! You carcinogenic clodhopping coxcomb! You doltish dogtrotter! You elephantine excursionist! You ..."

"She's gone," I mumbled, nearly awed. It had functioned almost like a cattle prod!

"Away, thou issue of a rangy dog!" yelled Grandison. Then, for a few moments, he was quiet. A vast and moving inner peace seemed to have illuminated his face. If my catharsis as spectator had been so intense, I could hardly imagine how *he* was feeling! "Shucks," he said, and pulling a few paper napkins from the dispenser, he bent over to wipe his shoes clean. "You know, according to the owner's manual, there are over four thousand variations of that sort. Foreign, unfortunately, was extra."

A few minutes later, as we waited for the elevator in the lobby, Grandison consented to let me wear the Vituperator for a short while. The Mizumi 001 comes with a good supply of sanitary plastic covers, so I put the earplug in without trepidation. It was comfortable, lightweight; there was a very faint sound, as if one were listening to the rustle of leaves several miles away. And all that potential in such a small set! I felt changed, dynamic, powerful, serenely confident. Even my feet felt more secure in their loafers, solid on the ground, and my shoulders seemed to square themselves. I was Clark Kent just waiting for action. But how, I thought, glancing about the lobby, could I try it out?

"Now, I've made sure it's not at Maximum Strength. The legal questions haven't been worked out here in the States yet."

"Gotcha."

The elevator arrived. Grandison and I stepped inside, politely retreating to the rear. In another moment, three other people had boarded, and we began our rise. Grandison informed me that he was toying with the idea of buy:ng—illegally—some more recent software: the Rabelais, for example, or the Swiftian I and II. He's also heard good things

## The Vituperator was working; a tiny voice was filling my head with the very verbal slings and arrows that I never could think of in time!

about a cheaper version, the Don Rickles Basic. I was, however, glad to learn that the beginning software was generous with the Bard himself, who could fling a few blades of invective. Grandison nodded to the young couple, squeezing each other's hands. "Ah, the lovebirds. Did I tell you that Mizumi is supposedly working on a related project, the Banterer? Baby, did anybody ever tell you you're built with curves like the hull of a racing yacht? I just don't know if it would be as popular."

We continued to chat idly until I noticed the distinctive smell of a cigarette in the closed cabin. I looked around at once; as I did, I felt rather than heard the Vituperator click into readiness. The executive in the grey suit stood gazing at the flashing numbers above the elevator door. Smoke trailed upward from his left hand.

"Excuse me, sir—there's no smoking in the elevator," I said, determined to be polite as long as I could manage. A glance at the neatly-lettered prohibition on the wall reassured me. My nose itched.

"That so?" he replied, not even turning. He made no move to put out the cigarette.

It was working, a tiny voice was filling my head with the very verbal slings and arrows that I never could think of in time! The voice was not Japanese; in fact, it sounded much like Orson Welles. "Oh, I beg your pardon," it was saying, "I presumed you could read."

"I beg your pardon," I repeated, ecstatic, "I presumed you could read..."

It: "This elevator is normally reserved for civilized human beings, but I suppose they've made an exception in your case."

I, enchanted, nearly fluent, followed: "This elevator is normally reserved," and so forth.

"With an accent such as yours, my good man, you hardly qualify as a spokesman for civilized human beings—or *beans*, as you put it." He spoke over his shoulder rapidly but casually, barely turning his head. "Perhaps you should keep to words of one syllable."

Momentarily confused by his swift counter-attack, I could not follow my Vituperator. The words in my ear buzzed by, blurring "... ironic that you should speak of ..." it was saying, but I was adrift. "... new standard of imbecility," it continued insistently. "New standard of imbel ... imb ..." But I tripped over the word in my haste. The executive stood calmly in the same spot, raising his cigarette to his face with an exaggeratedly languid movement. I scowled into his grey-suited back. Stung even

more by my own ineptitude, I muttered a common obscenity.

"Ah, more your style, isn't it, Roscoe? Or is your name Butch? Or Vito? The cry of the frustrated inarticulate."

"Is that a Virginia Slims you're smoking, honey?" I repeated, desperate.

"It is the mark of a small mind in obvious defeat to cast aspersions upon the sexuality of his polemical antagonist. But then, your mind is probably so small that calling it 'small' constitutes a compliment. I'd provide a gloss for the *big* words, sonny, but I'm sure they'd still be over your head. What college did you attend—Hard Knocks? You seem to have taken quite a few on the old noggin yourself ... Are you delivering a pizza to someone in the building? I smell garlic and pepperoni—unless that's your cologne."

The Vituperator now seemed to be humming dangerously, and a vicious headache had come from nowhere. Was it my imagination, or was the earplug getting a little hot? "Who picks your suits for you—Quasimodo?" This I managed to repeat with only a slight stammer, but the executive, flicking his ashes on the floor of the cabin, merely laughed. And still he did not deign to face me.

"Quasimodo? have you been browsing through Classics Illustrated again? Better keep to Dick and Jane, I think. Your tongue won't get in the way so often. Try not to drool on your shoes, by the way. You are wearing shoes, I presume? With your sort, one never knows ... But don't despair, my good man. With a few more years of hard work, you may graduate from moron to half-wit."

Just then, the elevator stopped again, and he prepared to disembark. My head was a battlefield of sounds: electronic whine, static, words out of context, repeating phrases. I tried to concentrate. "Clodhopping coxcomb!" I screamed. "Yes! That's what you are!" I yanked the Vituperator from my ear, half-expecting it to explode at any moment. Smoke? Hissing? It continued to yap, yap, yap, like a giant gnat. What the hell is a coxcomb?

"Have a nice day," said the executive, turning to me for the first time. The doors closed behind him.

"Good God!" yelled Grandison, clenching his fists in dismay. "He's got the 003!"

And as I slumped against the back of the elevator, still dazed, Grandison tried to comfort me. "Just bad luck ... Who could know ...? Hard for a beginner ... A good week of practice, at least."

"A good uppercut would have done the trick," I grumbled.

"Ah, but not for long," he replied with new excitement. His eyes glazed over, and as we ascended, he proceeded to tell me about the Mizumi 005, still being tested in the savage subways of Tokyo, supposedly with a Physical Rebuttal Efficiency of 92, an electric current that could flet a springing jaguar. It was something to start saving for. 12

# A FOOT IN THE DOOR

When he was thirty-four years old and about to buy a house in Short Hills, Mr. Gordon discovered he could get anything he wanted in life from an insurance agent named Merz. The agent specialized in small, cheap policies, thousand-dollar endowments, and put his feet in your door. Mr. Gordon had succeeded in putting Merz off and one night shouted at him, "I don't like people who put their feet in doors. That's no way to sell me."

"It's something I do and I can't help it," said Merz, wedging his foot in Gordon's apartment door and trying to force it back. "It isn't important and you'll soon see why. You'll see it's foolish to make anything over the foot business."

Gordon finally let Merz in, a thin man who got bad shaves and was always out of breath. Merz sold him a quick thousand-dollar endowment and when Mr. Gordon showed him out, said, "I've got something else you'll want. It's a way for you to have anything in the world. I haven't figured out whether it's insurance or not, but I have it for you and we can start it off tonight."

"I have plenty," said Gordon, "Everything I want. I'm going to buy a home in Short Hills next week, something I've always wanted."

"There'll be no nonsense and no fooling around," said Merz. "What you really want is a home in Tall Hills, and one thing you'd better learn is that it's a waste of time to be coy on this thing. Now I can get it for you. What we do is make a bargain. Some of them are going to sound strange, but they're made up that way and, frankly, I don't make them up."

"I can't afford Tall Hills," said Mr. Gordon, "but all right, I'll admit I'd like to get in there."

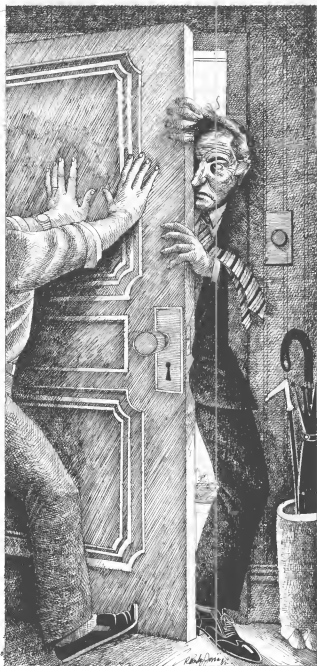
"All right then, now listen," said Mr. Merz, blowing his thin nose. "I don't do any paper work on these so remember it and don't come around to me and say you didn't get what you were supposed to. Tall Hills is yours, if . . . Let me rephrase that. When you don't use paper work, you've got to get them straight in the talking. A house in Tall Hills is yours, but your baby will have to be born with a slightly bent nose, I know that you, your wife, and your little girl have straight ones, but that's the way these things are made up. Sometimes a real winner comes along, but most are on this order."

"I'm not going to ask you for any guarantee, because I can tell from the whole way this has happened that it's on the level," said Mr. Gordon. "If you're wondering why I don't act astonished, it's just that I always expected something like this to happen. The only thing is I always thought there would be ethereal music in the background. Let's see, if it's a boy it won't matter so much and would give him character. The odds are slightly in favor of its being a boy. I don't know."

"Can we close?" said Merz. "It isn't that I go off and sell others when I'm finished with you. There

*If a guy wants to get ahead  
in this world,  
he's got to make a few sacrifices—  
unless he can get  
someone else to make them!*

by BRUCE JAY FRIEDMAN



aren't any others. I'm just tired and I get colds when I'm out late."

"Even if it were a girl," said Mr. Gordon, "it might just be a little imperfection that would make her appealing. I once saw a girl who was married to an archaeologist and she had a slight limp and it made her the most fragile and pathetic thing, and I could have eaten her up. Maybe this would be like a limp on her nose. Look, is it bent quite a bit or just slightly? Do I get to know that?"

"We don't know how they come out. It's more the spirit of the thing that counts, and if it came out small, there wouldn't be any objection."

"All right, then," said Mr. Gordon. "Get me into Tall Hills."

Merz said, "I can't always let you have this much time," and disappeared.

The Gordons' second child was born a month later, a boy with a cute but slightly bent little nose, and Mr. Gordon did not suddenly inherit a fortune. Nor did he suddenly receive a giant bonus from his firm or win a cash prize in a lottery. What happened is that he received a *small* inheritance from an uncle of his who had once spent a weekend hunting with Pancho Villa, his agency came through at Christmas with a slightly larger bonus than it had before, and Mrs. Gordon won a motorcycle in a raffle which they cashed in for four hundred dollars. The total, along with the money Mr. Gordon had set aside for a house in Short Hills, gave them the down payment for one in Tall Hills. And in they went with their new, cute, but bent-nosed little baby.

A month after the Gordons settled into their home, Merz stuck his foot in the door late one night and Mr. Gordon said, "For Christ's sake, you don't have to put it in there *now*, you know."

"I just put it in there, and don't really care to change at this stage of the game," said Merz. "Don't you open the door, either. Let me force my way in."

Mr. Gordon put his shoulder against the door and finally let Merz, breathing hard, shove his way in. "Okay now," said Merz. "I think you should have another thousand-dollar endowment. Now look, I don't want that other thing to color your decision. I'm talking straight insurance now, and if I found out you were taking a policy just because of that other thing I do, I'd be sore. Do you want one? Remember, it's important to keep these things separate."

"Then I don't think so," said Mr. Gordon. "I've got enough coverage for now."

"You don't," said Merz. "I'm going to keep hounding you until you buy more endowments. You don't have half enough and ought to be ashamed of yourself for carrying so little. But if you dare buy one because of that other arrangement we have, I'll kick you in the chops."

"I was wondering how often you come around," said Mr. Gordon. "That other thing really worked

out. He's going to have a certain American Indian appeal, and I don't think it'll bother him."

"I don't get into whether it'll bother him or not," said Merz. "All right then, you want Simms transferred and wall-to-wall carpeting, some of it covering the staircase to the second floor. This is going to make you laugh so you might as well get in the snickers right now. You get a wool or cotton option on the carpeting, and shade."

"This is funny," said Mr. Gordon. "Why do I want Simms transferred?"

"I told you I wouldn't settle for any coy stuff!" said Merz, rising in anger. He sat again, regaining his composure.

"Because we're neck and neck and because he has a slightly better personality and at one point or another will be quietly eased in as a senior executive, that's why," said Mr. Gordon.

"All right, then," said Merz. "Now I want your Uncle Lester."

"What do you mean you *want* him?" asked Mr. Gordon. "Don't tell me, because I know."

"That's right," said Merz, *he goes*. "Don't pin me down as to how, but I do know it won't be pretty."

"I didn't know that anyone had to go," said Gordon. "I thought what it would probably be is just *doing* things to people but not actually having them go. Anyway, it's amazing the way you work these things out. If you'd said Aunt Clara or Cousin Lars, I'd have thrown you out of here. These people are old and beat up and I don't see them more than once in a blue moon, but when I hug them to me I get a feeling of kinship and camaraderie. I don't get that at all from Uncle Lester and don't like the way he smells. He works on those prescriptions twelve hours a day and I never did understand him. He's seventy-six or something and it won't be long now for him anyway. All right then, he goes, but it's amazing how you knew to say Uncle Lester and not Aunt Clara. I'd have fought the hell out of you on her."

"They're made up cleverly, all right," said Merz, blowing his nose, "but I don't want to stay here and get friendly with you. All I really care about is that you buy more endowments, but purely on an insurance basis, and not because of this other arrangement of ours. Do you want cotton or wool carpeting?"

"Which do you think?" asked Mr. Gordon.

"If I was allowed to, I'd kick your chops," said Mr. Merz angrily. "Don't ask me idiotic things."

"All right then, wool," said Mr. Gordon. "Beige wool," and Merz flew out the door.

Within a week, a love affair between Simms and a bookkeeping girl came out in the open. The agency head called in "Simms and said, 'I don't care how creative you are, what you're doing is Hollywood and is a definite stink.'" Simms went to Dubuque, and Mr. Gordon sat back and waited to be told he'd been promoted and given an increase, one that



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worked out to \$1437 a year, the exact amount he'd need for carpeting the downstairs and the steps.

No promotion came, but at the end of a month, Merz drove up at night in a truck, and put his foot in Mr. Gordon's door.

"I don't see why you have to go through this each time," said Mr. Gordon, holding the door.

"I don't ask you questions," said Merz, his nose red, finally elbowing his way in. "I brought the carpeting. There was no way to have it just get to you so we're just handing it over. That happens sometimes and this is the one receipt I'll need." Mr. Gordon signed a piece of paper and Merz said, "Caught you. I didn't really need a receipt for the carpeting. I told you there's no paper work on the bargains we make. What you just signed is an endowment policy."

Merz left the carpeting on Mr. Gordon's porch and shot away.

Over the weekend, police caught Mr. Gordon's Uncle Lester accepting a case of stolen and tainted penicillin. A grand jury hearing was scheduled, but later that week Uncle Lester, out on bail, drove to the state line, turned on Gabriel Heatter and shot himself in the temple, leaving a garbled note that said, roughly, "Middle-class embarrassment. Old enough. Bang bang with Heatter. Get it?" When Mr. Gordon read about the note, he told Mrs. Gordon, "It's odd I should get a feeling of camaraderie for Uncle Lester now—after reading the note. I never had one before."

A month later, Merz got Mr. Gordon into the Tall Hills Golf Club. The arrangement put Gordon's father-in-law in a new job, one that sent the elderly, nearsighted man driving along precipitous mountain passes in southern Wyoming selling educational training aids to out-of-the-way prisons and mental hospitals. The final deal shipped Mr. Gordon, his wife, and one of the children off on a long-dreamed-of one-month vacation to Sark, and gave Mr. Gordon's mother a permanent toe fungus, one that was relatively harmless but maddeningly irritating. Mr. Gordon could have gotten two months in Majorca but balked when Merz insisted he would have to "take" Mr. Gordon's mother. The Sark weather was bad, and the Gordons got back a few days early. On the night of their arrival, Mr. Gordon got a call from a sultry-voiced female who said, "This is to inform you that Mr. Merz is dead and won't be selling you any further endowments." The woman hung up, and Mr. Gordon, feeling a little bit alone, thought, "I wonder if this is all there is to it? Whether I get to go on as though nothing had ever happened?" Being a realistic thinker, Mr. Gordon could not figure out any reason why he should not go ahead and live his life as he had always lived it.

Several weeks later, Mr. Gordon lost a cuff link and went into a charming little out-of-the-way boutique to replace it. The girl behind the counter had

dark hair covering her shoulders, melting brown eyes, and breasts that were impressive in that they were perfectly separated and elevated. She wore an intriguing scent and Mr. Gordon said, "You know, I came in here to buy cuff links, but your perfume is enchanting. You're damned appealing, too. What is it called?"

"Pizanie," the girl said, in a husky voice. "Accent on the second syllable. But too many people call it Pizzanee."

"It bowls me over," said Mr. Gordon. "Are you allowed to have lunch with people?"

"Mr. Lopez will sell you the cuff links," the girl said, lowering her lovely melting eyes.

A young man wearing a pinched suit in the style of a fopish Londoner came out with a tray of twisted metal cuff links and said, "I'm Lopez. These are from Mexico," Mr. Gordon selected a pair and Mr. Lopez said, "I've made a lunch reservation for the three of us." Mr. Gordon felt excited over the spontaneity of this new adventure and with a strange thrill fluttering at the base of his spine went along with his two new friends. The scent of the girl kept him bewildered through the first course and then it occurred to him that he had heard her voice before. "Didn't you call and tell me Merz was dead?" he asked.

She lowered her eyes and Mr. Lopez, eating with exquisite manners, said, "I asked her to call. Now look, I'm doing them with you from now on, only they'll be slightly different. No: really in spirit, but the ante goes up quite a bit. Now here's the first. You can have Lisa here any weekend you like, on into the interminable future, and we get your hair."

Mr. Gordon's hand instinctively passed up to his forehead and he asked, "All of it?"

"You get a fringe around the ears and a crescent on the back of the head, you know how that thing looks. We give you a premature gray speckling if you like, to soften the contrast between the fringe and your pale skin. It's better if you keep it short and, for whatever it's worth, we do foot all haircut bills from then on. Your wife doesn't ever get to know about Lisa."

"Look," said Mr. Gordon, "I don't want to act the prude and say the idea is horrible and that I don't want any girl I have to pay for. The only thing that irritates me is how you can set it up right in front of her that way."

"I don't care about her," said Mr. Lopez. "She helps me to sell cuff links."

The air was full of Lisa, and Mr. Gordon said, "Do you mean one weekend or all weekends forever?"

"As many as you like."

"I should probably be figuring this out to myself but I have to talk to someone," said Mr. Gordon. "What do I need my hair for if I can have her any time I want automatically? Now look, Lopez, there is one thing. I'm sorry about asking this, Lisa, but I'll just get it in and then I'll never do anything as



crude as this again. There's nothing wrong with her? I mean, she doesn't get epileptic fits or anything I should know about? Or limp? That's silly. Actually I don't mind a limp in a girl, and it's funny I should bring that in here. All right, I'll go along."

"I don't write them down either," said Lopez. "Would you like another pair of cuff links?"

"I'll take one more pair," said Mr. Gordon, tremulously taking the girl's hand.

The hair came out gradually in Mr. Gordon's comb and was gone within a month. Not until the last few dropped out did Mr. Gordon think of exercising his option, and on that day he bought a Homburg and dropped in at the boutique. He had a horrible fear, for one second, that Lisa would no longer be there and that he would have to travel the earth, hairless, to find his booty. But she was waiting, warm and sweet, with the scent of Pizanie floating about her ears, her bosoms high and impeccably separated.

Lopez came out with a tray from India and Mr. Gordon gave him two-fifty. Lopez asked him into a private office then and said, "Today's involves getting away from it all, leaving your job and doing whatever you want to do. Freedom. It's the only thing you don't have, not a fortune, but enough income to be able to thumb your nose at it all."

"As it stands I'll have to go into that stinking office right to my grave," said Mr. Gordon. "I made a good living, but I need to have every nickel to do what I'm doing. All right, what do you take? Paralysis for my sister? A nervous breakdown for Dad? Shoot. This is going to be good."

"A single evening with your wife."

"You can't have a single evening with my wife. Who gets it, you?"

"No," said Lopez.

What do I care who gets it? That's beside the point. I can't let you have that. I know, I know, I'm a hypocrite. I'll sell out my Uncle Lester and throw away my kid's nose and yet I make a big fuss over a

single, meaningless act of the flesh. I'm not going along, that's all. That's one deal I won't make and I'm not even going to explain it."

"You'll never have to do a day's work in your life."

"You mean just one time with one man?" said Mr. Gordon.

"That's all," said Mr. Lopez.

"When?" asked Gordon.

"You bring her to a Twenties party Saturday night. You can have her be a flapper and you a Harvard cheerleader. Lisa and I will be there as a Twenties gangster and his moll."

"This is one I don't feel happy about at all," said Mr. Gordon.

"Do we have an agreement?" asked Lopez.

"Yes," said Gordon.

During the week, Mr. Gordon rented a costume for his wife. She said it was beautiful and maybe he could buy it for her after the party. The party itself was dimly lit and all of the people were in costume, although some of them had spoiled the theme by showing up in flamenco dress. It was thick and loud and wild and Mrs. Gordon was immediately snapped up for the dance floor, leaving Mr. Gordon standing alone in his cheerleader uniform. Lisa and Lopez came over then. She made a lovely moll, one with perfectly separated bosoms and the scent of Pizanie about her throat. "Look I'm not going along," said Mr. Gordon, glancing over at his wife on the dance floor. She was whirling about with one of the flamenco fellows. "I can't even stand it when she dances with someone. Look, I can't go through with it. Who's the one she has to be with?"

"I told you that wasn't important," said Lopez.

"Will you point him out?" asked Mr. Gordon.

"Yes," said Lopez, and Mr. Gordon put his arms around Lisa and led her to the dance floor. Fifteen minutes later, Lopez tapped him on the shoulder and said, "She's with him now." Mr. Gordon looked up and saw his wife dancing with a slender, muscular man in a Twenties tank suit. They spun around. It was Merz. He seemed a trifle younger and somewhat better looking.

"You said he was dead," Mr. Gordon said to Lisa.

"Under my orders," said Lopez. "Don't blame her."

"Well, that settles it," said Mr. Gordon. "Now I'm definitely not going through with it. Not till Hell freezes over."

"We have an agreement," said Lopez, through thin lips.

"I don't care," said Mr. Gordon. "Not Merz. Maybe someone else, but not him. That's where I draw the line. I don't care what I said."

"It has to be Merz," said Lopez. "It's all arranged."

"Now look," said Mr. Gordon, running his hands over his bare dome. "I don't know whether I have

## A FOOT IN THE DOOR

the strength to argue with you or what, but I am not going through with this and that's that. I knew I shouldn't have started on this one. Now look I'll give you this much. Inside of blouse, upper thigh, and heavy necking, but that's it. Not the whole deal. Never the whole deal. Not with Merz."

"I can't account for what happens when you change them," said Lopez.

"Well, I don't care," said Mr. Gordon, folding his arms. "That's it and that's the way it's going to be."

"All right," said Lopez. "But I can't guarantee what's going to happen when you fool around with the packages. They're packaged one way for a reason."

"He wasn't even supposed to be alive," said Mr. Gordon, encircling Lisa's waist with his arms and picking up the music.

In a short while, he saw Mrs. Gordon and Merz get their coats and slip out the door. He kept dancing, and at the end of the evening, Mrs. Gordon returned alone and went into the powder room. Lopez came over and slipped a piece of paper into Mr. Gordon's cheerleading blazer. "It's a check that comes to sixteen hundred dollars, which is the store's gross weekly income. That's the way we've it set up, only you'll get it from now on in monthly payments. It's fairly steady, and of course if the store should fail, we're in supermarkets, clothing, and you should have no cause for anxiety. I'm taking Lisa now, but of course you can pick her up any weekend, beginning Friday nights at 6:45 and ending at the dinner hour Sunday, let's say eight."

Mr. Gordon was quite anxious throughout the following week and neither quit his job nor picked up Lisa. The following Saturday morning, Mrs. Gordon came to the breakfast table fully dressed and said, "I've got to go away and I don't think I'm coming back, and there's no need for you to talk patiently with me. It's going to be for always with this man and there isn't a thing in the world anyone can say to me to stop me. I don't know about the children. I just know I have to go. There was a brief time when it seemed if we could only get it out of our systems we could have forgotten each other, but it wasn't possible and now we have to go away together and take a lifetime because it isn't ever going to get out of our systems."

"Merz?" said Mr. Gordon.

"That's his name," said Mrs. Gordon, "but there isn't any use in your saying it a funny way or trying to cut him down because I need him and must have him."

Mr. Gordon's face went cold, and after his wife left, the shock carried him through the day and he remained rigid, like a sliding pond, as the children played all over him. What he was certain was going to hit him never did, somehow, and he got through the following week with only occasional spasms of

nausea. On Friday evening at 6:45, he went to Lisa's apartment, and the second she opened the door he bit her earlobe and inhaled her and undressed her and had her before the clock said seven. There had been a moment at the door, when he had feared a kind of quiet resignation on her part, but such was not the case and she made love to him with frenzy and hunger and they stayed together through the night. In the morning, she sat up and stretched in her nightgown, and yawned, and the nausea came back to him. "That Pizanie stays right on all through the night," he said.

"So many people call it Pizzanee," she said languorously.

"I don't like it in the morning when I want eggs," he said, "I'm not even sure I want it in the afternoon or any time before 6:45. And even then, I'm not sure any more," he said. Dressing quickly, he hollered, "PIZZANEE, PIZZANEE, PIZZANEE, IT SHOULD BE CALLED PIZZANEE," and then flew out the door.

He went to a private detective's office and told the man he wanted to find his wife and Merz. After twelve minutes of phone calls, the detective traced the pair to Las Vegas and said to Mr. Gordon, "You owe me forty-three dollars."

"How do you get that?" asked Mr. Gordon.

"I just do," said the detective.

"All right," said Mr. Gordon, paying the man. "I have unlimited funds."

A jet liner took Mr. Gordon to Las Vegas the same evening. He felt very giddy traveling without luggage, without preparation. In Las Vegas, he checked the rosters of the big hotels for Merz's name and couldn't find it. Then he went to the smaller hotels that weren't on the Strip and found a listing for a couple named Mercedes. Taking the stairs two at a time, he pounded on the door of the room until Merz opened it, wearing a pair of BVD's. He had grown a goatee in the beatnik style and his hair was unruly. The room was sultry and had no air conditioning. Inside, Mr. Gordon could see his wife in a pair of panties he recognized and a monogrammed blouse.

"Look, Merz," said Mr. Gordon, "my foot is in your door. The whole thing's off. I have got to have her back. I don't care whether she wants to come or not. She'll get used to me again and forget you, even if it takes fifty-two years. But she's my wife and I've got to have her back and there's no power on earth can stop me. I don't care who's behind this."

"I can't do it," said Merz.

"Why not?" said Mr. Gordon, with fists clenched.

"Because I took asthma, a bleeding ulcer, and let a Long Island train wreck have six of my grandchildren for your wife, that's why. It was under a special incentive plan for us employees."

Mr. Gordon understood perfectly and went away. 17

The legend of the undead is reborn  
—this time in space—  
in Tobe Hooper's  
long-awaited ...

# LIFEFORCE

by JAMES VERNIERE

Vampires have had a hell of a time since the Golden Age of Hammer Films, when dirty-minced little horror fans like me could get their fill of gore and cleavage in films such as *The Brides of Dracula* (1960) and *Kiss of the Vampire* (1963). Personal kinks aside, a few of those Hammer films were truly magnificent, and in fact some might argue that Terence Fisher's *Horror of Dracula* (1958), featuring Christopher Lee's sensual Count and Peter Cushing's ever-resourceful (indeed, even Holmesian) Van Helsing, is superior to the 1931 Ted Browning/Bela Lugosi version of Bram Stoker's classic novel.

In more recent times, though, the cinematic vampire has lost much of its power to enthrall us. With the exception of the occasional triumph, like John Llewellyn Moxey's *The Night Stalker* (1972), a television film written by Richard Matheson, the evolution of the vampire film might best be summed up by saying we've gone from *Dracula's Daughter* (1936) to *Dracula's Dog* (1978). More specifically, in the 1970s we were subjected to a black exploitation vampire (Remember *Blacula!*), a hippie guru vampire (in the person of Count Yorga), and a triple XXX vampire (*Dracula Exotica*).

To make matters worse, we've also been subjected to the Hollywoodization of the vampire in drek like John Badham's *Dracula* (1979), in which smoked-ham Frank Langella played a vampire that lived in Fred Munster's house and behaved more like Zorro

than Vlad the Impaler; and *The Hunger*, a "punk" vampire film by Tony ("Brother of Ridley") Scott, featuring Catherine Deneuve and David Bowie in what turned out to be *Dracula Meets Calvin Klein*.

Still, the question remains: Why is the power of the vampire myth greater than the film industry's power to exterminate it? Perhaps it is because the vampire is the ultimate Romantic hero, an outcast who has rejected God's salvation in favor of an eternal life of the senses, and because at its heart the myth has always been about love, even if that love is always fatal. The myth also has its political side. Almost always the vampire is a decadent aristocrat whose victims are nubile females from the lower classes, making the legend a kind of mythic reminder of the abuses of Medieval feudalism.

Whatever the reason, we still love a good vampire, and we may just have that love fulfilled when Tri-Star Pictures releases *Lifeforce*, an sf/horror hybrid by Tobe (*Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Salem's Lot*, *Poltergeist*) Hooper. Originally, (and perhaps more effectively) entitled *The Space Vampires*, after the Colin Wilson novel on which it's based, this twenty-five million-dollar film, scripted by Dan O'Bannon and Don Jakoby, might best be described as a high-tech Hammer film,

since in this science-fictional variation the vampires are not earthbound but bound for Earth, where they hope to reap the human harvest they have sown.

As the film's outer space setting suggests, *Lifeforce* will be a radical departure from vampire films featuring blood-sucking Baltic fiends in black opera capes. Indeed, the leading vampire in *Lifeforce* (described in the credits only as the "Space Girl") is a voluptuous siren from outer space who doesn't even have fangs. "There are no bites in the neck in my film," says the thirty-eight-year-old Texas-born Hooper. "In *Lifeforce* a human soul can literally be stolen with a kiss, because the vampires in the film live off of human souls. It's even suggested that they've been here before and may have cultivated the human race as food."

The occasion that marks the return of these extraterrestrial vampires is the seventy-six-year reappearance of Halley's Comet, and the film is appropriately set in 1986 to coincide with that real-life celestial phenomenon. The premise of the film is that a spacecraft named the Churchill, with a joint U.S.-British crew under the command of Colonel Tom Carlsen (Steve Railsback, star of *Helter Skelter*, and *The Stunt Man*) is sent to intercept the comet before its rendezvous with

Director  
Tobe Hooper



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Earth. What they find, hidden within the comet's nucleus, is a "vast, organic-looking alien spacecraft." Inside the seemingly dead vessel are three humanoid creatures—two male, one female—sealed within crystal sarcophagi. After the creatures are returned to Earth, a scientist named Dr. Hans Fallada (Frank Finlay) is unable to determine whether they are dead or alive, but he and his colleagues find out when they try to dissect the hauntingly beautiful female alien. What results is a vampiric reign of terror, set in modern-day London.

Why was Hooper, best known for as the cowriter and director of the cult classic *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and the director of the Steven Spielberg-produced *Poltergeist*, attracted to this project? "Because it attempts to explain the genesis of the vampire myth, and it also has elements of suspense and horror." But Hooper, who's been described as a maverick, may also have been lured by the prospect of a big budget film that he could make without being subjected to big studio meddling. Financed by Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus's Cannon Group, *Lifeforce* offered Hooper the opportunity to work as an independent without the budgetary constraints such a choice normally imposes. In addition, although *Lifeforce* may not serve to put to rest the unsubstantiated rumors that Hooper was not the chief creative

force behind *Poltergeist* (rumors that Spielberg himself has tried to quell), the film will certainly serve to reestablish him as one of our most dynamic filmmakers after a two-year hiatus.

It's always difficult to predict how a film will play sight unseen. But if previous experience is any indication, then *Lifeforce* will be hot, because the production team includes not only Hooper but also special effects supervisor John (Moonraker) Gant, optical effects expert John (Star Wars) Dykstra, cinematographer Alan (Return of the Jedi) Hume, and coscreenwriter Dan (Alien, Blue Thunder) O'Bannon. As impressive as that lineup is, it is perhaps O'Bannon's contribution that may prove the most interesting to fans of genre films of the fifties and sixties, since, like *Alien*, the plot of *Lifeforce* recalls that such cult gems as *It! The Terror from Beyond Space* (1958) and Mario Bava's atmospheric *Planet of the Vampires* (1965), with perhaps a dash of Curtis Harrington's *Queen of Blood* (1966).

But in the final analysis, *Lifeforce* is the director's film and Hooper is clearly high on it. Currently in preproduction as producer of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre II* and director of a remake of William Cameron Menzies's classic *Invaders from Mars* (1953), Hooper is especially excited about *Lifeforce*'s surrealistic climax. "It's what we call a 'spirit storm.' Human souls will be

ripped out of people on London streets in a shower of ectoplasm."

If that sounds like a scene from a transcendental splatter film and a cunning way to sidestep the MPAA's increasingly conservative stance against cinematic violence, it's probably by design. Hooper, the maestro of the chainsaw, is also a wizard at conjuring up horrific imagery. Who can forget *Massacre*'s "Leatherface," or the decomposing head and corpse-a-poppin' pool scenes from *Poltergeist*, or the levitating child vampire in *Salem's Lot*? Surely if Hooper's previous work is any indication, then *Lifeforce* will turn out to be a film vampire lovers can sink their teeth into.



Kissing space vampire Mathilda May (above) turns space probe crewman into the living dead (left).



**FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, THE MAGIC OF ANIMATION  
MEETS THE SPECTACLE OF 3-D!**

# STARCHASER

## THE LEGEND OF ORIN

### 3<sup>IN</sup>-D

**AN ADVENTURE OF EPIC PROPORTIONS!**



**ORIN**

The heroic young boy  
who freed a planet.

**AVIANA**

The princess who dared  
to believe the unbelievable.

**ZYGM**

Evil master of  
the underworld who  
feared only one.

**DAGG**

A daredevil starpilot  
who helped change  
galactic history.

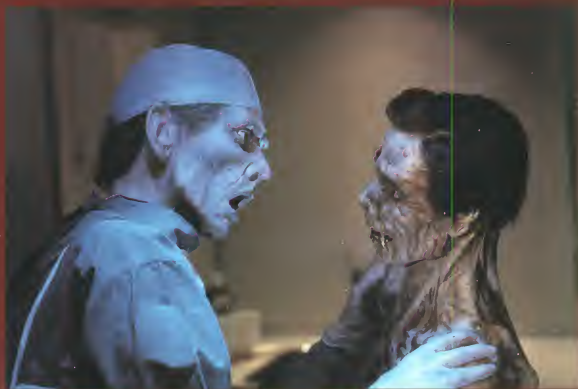
**SILICA**

The sensitive fembot  
who learned to love  
a human.

Thomas Coleman and Michael Rosenblatt present  
A Steven Hahn Film "STARCHASER: The Legend Of Orin" Written by Jeffrey Scott  
Music by Andrew Belling, Associate Producers Daniel Pia and Christine Danzo  
Produced and Directed by Steven Hahn  
Executive Producers Thomas Coleman and Michael Rosenblatt  
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**Coming soon to a theatre near you.**

# LIFEFORCE





Clockwise from above: Spacemen probing Halley's Comet discover, within its core, a 150-mile-long alien spacecraft inhabited by (what else?) bats. And also by space vampires (Bill Malin and Christopher Jagger) who aren't fazed by bullets. Steve Railsback plays an Air Force colonel manning the probe. Humans who are bitten become vampires themselves. French actress Mathilda May makes a seductive vamp when she sheds her clothes (which is often). But not when she sheds her human form.









Director Ron Howard

Maureen Stapleton, an Academy Award winner for her role in Warren Beatty's *Reds*, isn't happy. But she's being—well, *nice* about it. "We've been here a couple of months now," she says, gesturing vaguely toward the pool of the St. Petersburg Hilton and, by implication, the finely grained beach fronting the warm Atlantic beyond. "And all the people have been marvelous," Stapleton sighs, shifts in her beach chair, and squints at the sun. "On the other hand, when you're on location this long, things tend to get a bit ... dull."

Dull indeed. Anyone who's been forced down in St. Petersburg for a few days (discounting the locals and the ever-growing number of ex-New Yorkers fleeing that beleaguered metropolis) gets a quick lesson in why the city is one of Florida's most popular retirement communities. There's the sun, of course, the sea, and the river-threaded salt marshes dotted with flat timberland all around you. But other than a small downtown area filled with shopping malls and theaters that could be from Anytown, U.S.A., that's about it for St. Pete. It's quiet here, folks, and we like it that way, thank you very much.

All by way of preamble to point out that the cast and crew of *Cocoon*—actor/director Ron Howard's follow-up to last year's popular *Splash*—couldn't be in a better spot. *Cocoon* deals with getting too old, getting too comfortable, getting, in other words, too dead while you're still on your feet. The fact that the

film centers on a group of retirement home citizens slowly fading out of life, only to be shaken out of that deadly complacency by a group of benign aliens masquerading as humans, seems a perfect parallel to the situation faced by the St. Petersburg residents as Hollywood descended on their sleepy little town.

A 20th Century-Fox release due out this summer, *Cocoon* has a screenplay by Tom Benedek based on a novel by David Saperstein. Producers Richard D. Zanuck, his wife Lili Fini Zanuck, and David Brown plunked their crew on location August 20, 1984; after ten weeks the unit moved on to the Bahamas for a couple of weeks' additional filming, mostly underwater. These aliens, you see, also charter boats and scuba dive, all in the effort to retrieve and safeguard some large, rather mysterious aquatic pods left by the creatures when they were here on Earth 2500 years ago. There's also a retirement home in *Cocoon*, one right next to a mysterious swimming pool which is really the Fountain of Youth ... But never mind, see the film yourself. It will also feature some special effects sequences courtesy of George Lucas's Industrial Light and Magic (under the supervision of Ken Ralston) and complex makeup by Greg Cannom, whose work has also been on display in *The Howling* and *Greystoke*.

Other than the presence of Ron Howard (who went from playing small-screen characters like Andy Griffith's son Opie and *Happy Days'* Richie Cunningham to become the surprisingly good big-screen director of *Night Shift* and *Splash*, *Cocoon*'s main points of interest are its story and cast. And what a cast it is, a true one-of-a-kind ensemble. Sandwiched between such newcomers as Steve Guttenberg (*Police Academy*), Tahnee Welch (Raquel's daughter), Tyrone Power (son of the late actor), and Brian Dennehy (*First Blood*'s pursuing sheriff) are a veritable Who's Who of early-generation stage and screen stars: Don Ameche, Gwen Verdon, Jack Gilford, Hume Cronyn, Jessica Tandy, Wilford Brimley, and, yes, Maureen Stapleton.

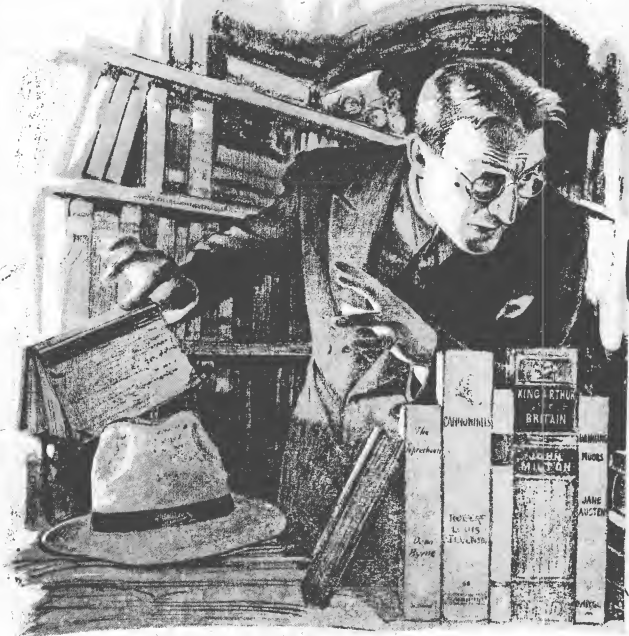
*Cocoon*'s story line should warm the hearts of *Twilight Zone* fans, for the fossilized residents of *Cocoon*'s retirement home—golden agers who suddenly gain new youth through the

intervention of rather unearthly newcomers—will stir pleasant memories of George Clayton Johnson's "Kick the Can," the classic tv episode which was remade as the Steven Spielberg-directed segment of *Twilight Zone: The Movie*. Not that we're talking imitation here—*Cocoon*'s story line is much too inventive for that; besides, this youth-age theme is only one of its threads. But the idea that you're only as old as you feel is still a damn good one. Ask Don Ameche.

Born Dominic Felix Amici on May 31, 1908, in Kenosha, Wisconsin, Don Ameche was a well-known radio personality before (and after) he became one of Fox's busiest leading players. Ameche has worked with the likes of Al Jolson (*Swanee River*), John Barrymore (*Midnight*), and Alice Faye (*That Night in Rio*). However, before his role as an uncaring financier who elevates street hustler Eddie Murphy from rags to riches in John Landis's 1983 hit comedy *Trading Places*, Ameche was probably best known as the title character of 1939's *The Story of Alexander Graham Bell*. "Although I must say," insists Ameche (whose smooth courtesy vividly recalls the days when stars were really stars) "that most serious, thinking people I've ever talked to would list my best picture as Lubitsch's *Heaven Can Wait*. I consider it my best film as well."

Filmed by director Ernst Lubitsch in 1943, *Heaven Can Wait*—a title lifted for the 1978 Warren Beatty vehicle—was a light fantasy starring Ameche as a dead sinner trying to gain admittance to a very stylish Hell run by a satanic Laird Cregar. "Before John Landis, I always considered Lubitsch to be the only truly great director I had ever worked with. I remember Lubitsch telling all of us on stage one day that he and screenwriter Sam Raphaelson had polished that script for eight months after they'd finished it. He then begged us not to change a word of it. So all I had to do was memorize my lines. Of course, *Heaven Can Wait* was a total satire, because that's the kind of man Lubitsch was; he laughed at life and always had a twinkle in his eye. That film had a definite statement, too, which was that people take themselves much too seriously, that there's too much self-importance in the world.

(continued on page 87)



**I**n the dead sultriness of Manhattan midsummer there was no incentive to write. Marston's apartment was like the inside of a kiln. Two hours ago he had stripped off his damp shirt and sat down before his typewriter. Now, for all his labors, he had nothing to show but a dozen crumpled balls of bond paper flung haphazardly in and at the wastepaper basket.

"Damn novels!" muttered Marston. "And damn editors with deadlines. And damn this heat!"

He swept a handful of white and yellow sheets from the tray before him, leafed through them bitterly. It was good idea, his plot for this novel. He read again the three chapters he had completed. It was good work; some of the best he had ever done; smoothly written. *The Underlings*. A psychological story of defeat, and of ones who let themselves be defeated. "The fault, dear Brutus, is not with our stars—"

A good theme. And so far, a good job. But—This heat! This overwhelming, enervating heat.

He was, Marston realized with a sudden petulant anger, ill. Actually and physically ill. He gave up. With a final despairing glance at the white sheet shining in the platen roll, he rose. He was shocked to find his exhaustion so deep that as he stood up there danced before his eyes a black vertigo, brief but frightening.

There could be only suffocation and discomfort so long as he remained here. Out of doors it would be hot, too, but there might be a ghost of a breeze stirring in the shaded streets down by the river.

Marston put on shirt and coat, and went out.

He had not remembered the bookshop was along this way—had, indeed, quite forgotten the little shop until suddenly there it was, just a few paces before him. Then he recalled the several occasions on which, before, he had seen it and planned to drop in for a browse. Each time, circumstances had prevented his doing so.

The bookshop was far from prepossessing in its

# the Bookshop

It was, you might say, a specialty shop.  
And what it sold was very special indeed.

A Classic Story by NELSON BOND



appearance. It was ancient and musty, and its only lure was the faint aura of mystery ever attendant to dark neglected places. How long it had been a fixture in this neighborhood, Marston had no way of knowing. It did, apparently, but a slight business, for of the scores who passed it by, none save himself so much as turned a head to peer into its dusty window.

He had seen it first a year ago or so—that afternoon when, with poor Thatcher, he had been riding by here on a bus. Thatcher was a minor poet; not a very good one, but an ardent one. He had been regaling Marston with an enthusiastic preview of his latest masterpiece, soon to be released.

"Very soon, Marston. Just a few more stanzas and it goes to the publisher. It . . . it's a good work, Marston. Oh, I know that sounds braggart, coming from me. But a writer can tell when his work is good or bad. This isn't like anything I've done before. It's poetry this time. *Real* poetry—"

His tone was pathetically eager. Marston mur-

mured, "I'm sure it is, Thatcher."

"I know it is. I'm calling it *Songs of a New Century*. It will make me, Marston. Up to now, I've just been a versifier. This book will give me a reputation. See if I'm not right . . . Oh, I say!"

He stopped suddenly. Marston, glancing up swiftly, remembered that Thatcher's health was reportedly on the thin edge. The man didn't look at all well. His cheeks were too pale, his eyes too dark and sunken. "What is it, old man? You all right?"

"What?" Thatcher recovered his poise, ventured the slimmest excuse for a smile. "Oh . . . oh, yes, quite!" But he pressed the buzzer that drew the bus to the curb and rose, Marston thought, a little abruptly. "I'm fine, thanks. But I just remembered a little errand. Chap I have to see. In there."

And he pointed to the shop before which Marston now stood.

Marston insisted, "You're sure you feel well? Perhaps I should come along—?"

"Now, don't you worry about me, I'll be all

right. Chap's an old friend of mine." Thatcher climbed down from the bus. He called back over his shoulder, "See you later, Marston. Watch for the Songs—"

But he had, thought Marston regretfully, been mistaken. On both counts. They never met again. Nor did the new book ever appear. Poor Thatcher was not so well as he had hopefully claimed. It was his heart. The next day Marston read his name in the obituary column.

All of a year ago, that had been. Since then, Marston had thought often of the little bookshop. It held a sort of macabre fascination for him; an association of ideas Marston could not explain even to himself. Into that little shop Thatcher had disappeared, Marston had never seen him again. It made the bookshop a—sort of symbol.

Silly, of course. But last winter when Marston lay ill of the flu and tossed for restless hours in delirium, it had become almost an obsession with him. A compulsion clung to him; he experienced an insensate desire to climb from his sickbed and visit it. A curious urge, but one so powerful that when finally he recovered, he *did* make a special trip to the little shop.

But he had chosen a poor time. It was closed. The door was latched and bolted, and the shades drawn tight.

Now, however, it was not closed. The shade was up, the door an inch or so invitingly ajar. And though the shop was small, there would be coolness in its musty depths. The sun poured down on Marston's head and pressed on his shoulders with a ponderable strength. His head ached, and a dull nausea was upon him.

He opened the door and went in.

The transition from glaring sunlight to shaded dark was abrupt; at first he could see nothing. Somewhere in the back of the shop a bell jangled softly; ancient silences seemed to well in upon the cheerful, tinny sound, engulfing, stilling it.

Marston, stumbling forward, bumped against a table. Surprise brought a small "Oh!" to his lips, and he clung to the table, waiting for his moment of blindness to pass. Out of the shadows before him came a quiet, sympathetic voice.

"Did you hurt yourself, my friend?"

Marston complained, "It's dark in here."

"Dark?" A moment's silence. Then, "Dark, yes. It is, I suppose. But peaceful."

Marston could see more plainly now. He stood in the corner of a small, low-ceilinged room walled on either side with shelves of books. The table before him also was piled high with bound volumes. Some were old and faded; others, he was surprised to notice, were brightly new.

Beyond the table was a tiny desk, and at the desk a quiet figure sat, imperturbably scratching

with an old goose quill in a ledger open before him. In the ill light Marston could not clearly see the proprietor's face, but he saw bent shoulders, and white hair shining like a halo in the gloom. There was, he felt, something vaguely familiar about the old man's features—something tantalizingly near the fringes of his memory . . .

It slipped away even as he tried to grasp it. And the proprietor looked up.

"Is there anything in particular, my friend?"

"Just looking," said Marston. Like all book lovers, he loathed efficiency in the management of a bookstore. He preferred seeking, in his own good time and at his own whim, whatever of literary interest the shop might hold for him.

The old man nodded.

"There is no need for haste," he said, and returned to his interminable scribbling. The goose-quill pen scraped dryly but not unpleasantly. Marston turned to the shelves.

It did not occur to him at once that there was anything unusual about the books on which he looked. That realization came upon him gradually; hence it came as a slow, growing wonder and not with any deep, sharp sense of shock. There are so many books, so many authors. Their names are legion; easily forgotten. Marston's eyes had traveled over perhaps a full row before there awakened in his mind the awareness that he had viewed something strange and puzzling, something that did not ring quite true.

He glanced back along the row. The proprietor apparently had made no effort to separate his stock according to subject matter. Poetry, plays and novels, essays and novels, essays and texts stood side by side in scrambled heterogeneity. Titles heretofore unknown by Marston. New names and old . . . old thoughts and new.

Then he saw a thin volume, brown with age. The title, *Agamemnon* . . . by Shakespeare? Marston knew of no such title. The hot spark ever latent in the heart of the book worshiper leaped suddenly into blaze. One of two things: he had stumbled across either the most amazing discovery of the century of the greatest hoax ever perpetrated in the name of art. His pulse quickening with excitement, Marston reached for the volume.

Then his hand, in reaching, stayed. For now he saw, senses sharpened by his discovery, still other titles; books equally unknown and equally amazing. *King Arthur of Britain* by John Milton. *Cap'n Catfish*, by Mark Twain. *John Galsworthy's Feet of Clay*, and *Darkling Moors* by Charlotte Brontë.

Swiftly his gaze dropped to another shelf. He saw with a vast, incredulous incomprehension *Christopher Crump* by Charles Dickens, *The Gargoyle's Eye* by Edgar Allan Poe, *Thackeray's Colonel Cowperthwaite*, and *The Private Casebook*

He had stumbled across  
either the most amazing discovery  
of the century  
or the greatest hoax ever perpetrated  
in the name of art.

of *Sherlock Holmes* by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

He had heard no footsteps, but now he was aware that at his side stood the proprietor of the little shop. There was quiet pleasure in the old man's voice.

"You admire my books, young friend?"

Marston could only wave a hand at the shelves. His speech was stammering, confused.

"But ... these! I don't understand!"

"You are Robert Marston, aren't you? Fantasy is your field. You should appreciate these others."

Marston's gaze helplessly followed the proprietor's gesture. He looked upon names well known to him as his own, but at titles never before dreamed of. *The Troglodytes* by Jules Verne, Charles Fort's *What Unseen Presence?*, *Hanuman*, the *First God* by Ignatius Donnelly, Weinbaum's *Spaceman*, and Lovecraft's bulky *Complete History of Demonology*.

And under these smaller volume; a thin, bright volume with untarnished bookjacket. Its title ... *Songs of a New Century*. Its author ... David Thatcher.

It was then, suddenly, that Marston understood. A great dull prescience filled him, and to his host he said in a voice that was strangely tired, "I suppose, then it—it, too, is here? And the old man nodded gravely, "*The Underlings*? Yes, my son; it, too, is here."

There was but one copy, fresh and shining new as if it had at this very moment come from the publisher's office. The dust jacket was brave and fair. Even in this shaken hour, Marston's heart knew a swift, high lift of pride in this, his book.

He reached for it—then hesitated. And of his aged host he asked, "May I?"

"It is your book," said the old man.

And Marston took it down....

Oh, some changes had been made, he found, in the opening chapters. But they were minor editings. In the main, those scenes were as he had written them. With shaking hands he turned the clean white pages. His eyes sought avidly words that heretofore had never known the permanence of print, read thoughts that up till now had existed only in his mind.

And swiftly though he read, he knew with fierce, bright joy that he had not erred in claiming

this his finest work.

There was no mediocrity in this book; no faltering, no stumbling confusion of ideas. Each sentence was perfect; no word or thought or phrase but shone with lustrous purity. This was the book Marston had always somewhere deep within him. Here was the triumphant accomplishment of his writing powers. And Marston, who knew books, knew that his book was great, and that in it, at the end, his skill had attained its full fruition ...

At the end!

He closed the book, and its closing was a small and startling sound in the fusty silence. He stared at his host, knowing now wherein the face and form had been familiar. A coldness was upon him, and a sudden fear, and he said loudly, "But no! Not now, old man! Not before it is finished—"

The old man said quietly, "Surely you see it cannot be finished over *there*, Marston? Nothing is ever perfect on that side. Only in this bookshop are stories and songs high and sweet and true as their authors dreamed them.

"There *The Underlings* would be but another book—a clothbound, crippled symbol of a dream that died aborning. Thoughts as lofty as the stars faltering on words too weak to bear them. Tales finished over there are never truly great. Always they lack the wings on which their authors envisioned them.

"Only in the library of the left-undone may a story reach the heights intended by its creator. Here—beside an epic Homer ever meant to write, a play that Marlowe planned but did not put into words, Galsworthy's last and greatest romance, ten thousand tales unwritten by a thousand dreamers—here *The Underlings* can take its rightful place in the imperishable library of might-have-been.

"It is the final price for perfection. And a small one."

His voice soughed into silence like the last faint whisper of the moondrawn tide. And it seemed to Marston that a new sound reached his ears; it was as though voices spoke to him from some not distant place, voices greeting him in good fellowship, bidding him come and join their camaraderie. He heard—or thought he did—the laughing voice of Thatcher.

"What's all the fuss, old boy? My soul, but you're making an issue of a simple matter—"

Now the old man held out his hand to Marston.

"Are you ready, my friend?" he asked.

But—there was the book in his hand. And suddenly there swept into Marston's brain a thought so daring that an ague seized his limbs.

It was not yet too late! Nor would it be until that ancient hand met his. Could he but reach the street outside—and with this book—*The Underlings* might yet be given to the world in all its dreamed perfection!

(continued on page 86)



DKP

# MOTHER'S DAY

His mother was extremely hard to please—  
but nothing like his long-dead father!

by STEPHEN F. WILCOX

The two-story frame house on Madigan Street was fast going to seed. The paint on the old wood clapboards—a diluted yellowish gold seemingly exclusive to aged city houses—had blistered and alligatored from myriad seasons of sun and rain and snow. Not that the rest of the street was in any better shape; an empty wine bottle lay in the storm gutter, a gaggle of candy wrappers rode down the sidewalk on a stiff winter breeze, a rusty Oldsmobile sat perched on cinder blocks in a yard three doors down.

Donald took it all in as he pulled his late-model Chevrolet into the driveway and switched off the ignition. He didn't enjoy coming back to the old neighborhood. Changes came too quickly, often too violently here, and made him feel much older than his thirty-two years. And there was the memory of Father. It dominated the place like an open wound that refused to heal.

But Donald came, because he had to come. It was Saturday afternoon, and Saturday afternoons, nearly every one he could remember, belonged to Mother.

"Lucky Ellen. Smart Ellen," he muttered as he lifted the bulky toolbox from the trunk of his car. Big sister Ellen had married an airline executive and moved out to Chicago a dozen years before, effectively creating an eight-hundred-mile buffer zone breached only once a year at Christmas.

The steps groaned as Donald climbed to the front porch and crossed to the door, the toolbox swinging at his side. Briefly he inspected the new storm door he had installed the Saturday before and laughed mirthlessly at the red and black sign mother had since affixed to its upper pane. *No Solicitors*. He knocked on the inner door using the code Mother insisted on—shave-and-a-haircut, two bits—and let himself in with his key.

"It's me, Mother. Don't panic," he called out dryly.

"Donnie Bear? Is that you? Come see me."

Donald set the toolbox in the foyer and walked into the living room, taking care not to upset the china cat that rested in the doorway. The room was a study in kitsch; a worn but still serviceable oriental rug, a Victorian sofa incongruously flanked by two striped platform rockers, a wicker basket brimming with skeins of virulently colored yarns, and everywhere ceramic figurines. Cherubs dancing on the windowsills, the Virgin Mother staring down from atop the television set, rearing horses and

towheaded little boys and a heroic bust of JFK on the bookshelf. And the big china cat by the doorway.

"I'm in here, Donnie Bear. I haven't been feeling very well the last few days."

He opened the sliding door leading to what had always been the dining room but now served as Mother's bedroom. It was better this way, she insisted, what with her bad hip and the trouble she has climbing stairs and the high cost of heating the whole house these days. The summer before, at Mother's urging, Donald had rehung the door at the top of the stairs and shut down the heating vents to the second floor. The man who bought the heavy oak dining table and hutch had helped him move Mother's bedroom furnishings downstairs.

"Is it the arthritis again, Mother?" Donald asked with all the sincerity he could muster.

She was sitting up in the bed, a checked afghan spread across her lap. "I suppose so. Whatever, it pains me something awful. Just getting old, I guess."

"Nonsense. You'll never get old." But she already has, Donald thought, taking in the crow's feet and denture lines and the scrawny slackness in the skin of her neck and arms.

"Your father would have been sixty-seven last week," she said softly but emphatically.

Donald pretended not to hear. "Angela sends her love."

"I'm sure," Mother sniffed. "Did she send along a temperance lecture, too?"

"She's not like that, really. It's just that, well, with her own family and the problems they've had with alcohol, she doesn't like to see—"

"Oh, and now I'm an alkie, I suppose? Because I have a little brandy in my tea? She doesn't care that it helps ease my pain a little. Makes me feel like a criminal when I visit you."

Donald sighed. "It's because she cares about your health that she doesn't like to see you ... over-doing it."

"Well, I don't want to argue about it," Mother said, changing moods. "How's Little Bill? Does he send his grandma a big kiss?"

"Billy is fine," Donald nodded. He resented it when Mother called his three-year-old son Little Bill. It had been Angela's idea to name the boy William, after Donald's father, and Donald had agreed. But mother's pointed referrals to "Little Bill" were too much.



## MOTHER'S DAY

Big Bill Heidler, everyone had called his father. A man's man. An outdoorsman of consummate skill and enthusiasm, he bought Donald his first fishing rod when he was only Billy's age and presented him with a .22 rifle of his own on his tenth birthday. Every kid on the block envied Donald that day. Big Bill Heidler. "My boy just may be the best shot in the state someday, you wait and see," Big Bill bragged proudly to his hunting buddies the day Donald shot his first rabbit. But that was long ago, before the accident.

"You planning to finish the house today?" Mother asked.

"Yes. I brought my tools. Actually, I did most of the work last week. All I have left to do is the front door and the living room windows."

"That's good. These fuel bills I've been getting are horrible and we're not even into the worst part of the winter yet." Mother coughed, a dry, affected hacking to emphasize her next remark. "I've been keeping the thermostat way down, like you told me, Donnie, but I don't know. Seems like I'm always cold these days."

"Well, you'll be able to turn up the heat a little once I'm through weatherizing the rest of the place."

"I'd better be. It's not fit to live in, hardly, like this."

"You made the decision to stay here, Mother. We offered to take you in at our place. We could have sold this old house and used the money to build you your own studio apartment off the back of our house."

"Hmmmph. Take me in, all right, like you take in somebody's dirty laundry." She shook her head. "Angela doesn't really want me there anyway."

"That's not true," Donald said. In fact, it was Angela who first suggested the idea to Donald. But Mother didn't know that and wouldn't have believed it had he told her. Angela had married her boy and taken him away from his home, his duties, and Mother would never forget that.

"What would I do way out there?" she asked rhetorically. "The bus line doesn't even go out that far. How would I get to the downtown stores? I'd never see my friends."

"It's only fifteen miles by freeway, Mother," Donald said, exasperation beginning to seep through the calm of his voice. "I've told you before, Angela would take you shopping at the mall near our subdivision. And I could drive you into the city when you wanted to visit with your lady friends." But not every blessed Saturday afternoon, Donald thought.

"It wouldn't be the same." Mother kneaded the edges of the afghan with her spindly fingers, refusing to look up at her son. "This is our home, always. Your father practically rebuilt this place all by himself, in his spare time, when he wasn't out making a good life for us all. He'd never forgive me if I let

you move me out of here. He'd roll over in his grave."

There was the spectre of Father again, and this time Donald couldn't ignore it. The pain ran too deep; the memories cried too loud. "It wasn't my fault," he said plaintively.

Mother waited a second too long before answering. "I know that. You couldn't help it. I've always known that."


He'd been sixteen years old; half his life ago. November. The early morning had provided a light dusting of snow, as if to aid them in the hunt. He remembered a pewter sky and the sharp cold air, like a knife in his lungs. There was a clearing in the woods, a gently sloping hillock, and beyond that a copse of young birch trees tangled up with wild ivy. Father had circled and gone ahead to flush the buck. Now there came a rustling in the birch grove and a slight movement as the brush parted ahead of Donald. He raised the .12 gauge to his shoulder, a deer slug ready in the chamber. Another movement in the trees. He hesitated a lifetime, and then fired.

"It wasn't my fault," Donald muttered to himself, as he yanked the caulking gun from his tool box and inserted a tube of elastic sealant. Using a utility knife to cut the tip off the tube, he watched the white goo ooze slowly up the nozzle and he set to work plugging the gaps around the aluminum storm windows.

The house had been quiet for the last two hours while Donald labored to complete the weatherization project. Mother stayed in her converted bedroom, browsing aimlessly through one of the many mail order catalogues she kept under the bed. She never disturbed Donald when he was taking care of her house. The job moved along at a satisfactory pace; the duty was light this day. Still, Donald couldn't keep his mind on what his hands were doing. The memories wouldn't let him.

It was always like that when he came to the house. He would walk up the front steps and remember when Father had built them to replace the crumbling cement steps that had been there before. He could see the corded muscles in father's shoulders when he swung the sledge, breaking down the old steps into defeated bits of concrete. He would come into the foyer and see the closet father had built in the corner and the ten-point antlers, father's prize kill, mounted above the kitchen door. He would go down to the basement to change a fuse and stumble across the steamer trunk full of battered bowling trophies father had won and the stacks of yellowed outdoors magazines father had collected.

Everywhere he looked, Donald saw Big Bill Heidler, the man's man, and himself, a terrified sixteen-year-old boy all alone on a November



He raised the .12 guage to his shoulder,  
a deer slug ready in the chamber.

Another movement in the trees.

He hesitated a lifetime,  
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morning in the woods.

A tragic accident, the minister had said. Instantaneous death due to a gunshot wound in the chest, the coroner had ruled, and the authorities had closed the book on it. At least he didn't suffer, said those who only wanted to be kind. But Donald had suffered, and suffered still with every reminder. He saw Ellen and remembered the accusatory tears. He saw the old neighborhood and remembered the long lines at the funeral parlor. He saw this house and remembered it all. And so did Mother.

"Donnie Bear, how's it going out there?" she called to him from her bed.

"Fine," Donald answered. "I'm just about done."

"I was thinking I might like some tea," she said.

"Wouldn't a nice hot cup of tea be good?"

"Sounds great," Donald called out, as he finished caulking the last gap on the last of the living room's three windows. "You take it easy, Mother, and I'll put the water on to boil."

Putting away the caulking gun, he carried his toolbox with him as he passed through the foyer to the kitchen. The tea kettle sat in its usual place atop the massive forty-inch range, the very one Father bought years ago when Donald was seven or eight. He remembered trying to help as Father and the man from the appliance store carried the great white monster into the kitchen, and Father telling him he was too small and that he should just stay out of the way.

Now the big range was old and less formidable somehow; the porcelain enamel was chipped in spots and worn off completely on the rounded corners. Donald carried the kettle to the sink, filled it halfway with fresh tap water and replaced it on the left front burner. Taking a long wooden match from the box on the counter, he lighted the gas burner and watched, mesmerized, as the blue-orange flame licked the kettle's underside.

A huge roaring bonfire out at the landfill site, a senior class tradition at the old high school. Laughter and taunts as his classmates drank beer from cans and danced wildly around the pyre. Graduation in a week and, when summer ended, off to college at exotic-sounding places like Chapel Hill and Palo Alto. But not for Donald. He would stay home. Mother was all alone now, and she needed him. There would be his old room and menial jobs in restaurants and shoe stores. He would take, but fail,

the entrance exam for the police academy. Then the eight long years of night school at City College and the desk job with the area's largest manufacturing firm. Marriage to Angela, the new split level in the suburbs, a family of his own. But always there were the Saturday afternoons at Mother's.

"Here were are, all hot and delicious," Donald announced as he placed the tray on the bedside table and handed Mother her cup of tea. Without comment, she reached below the table and brought up a nearly depleted bottle of blackberry brandy. Donald pretended not to notice when she poured a liberal portion of the elixir into the cup. He recognized the mildly glazed, mildly petulant look in her eyes and he knew what to expect. First she would be combative, then sweet and conciliatory; finally she would sleep, convincing herself when she awoke the next morning that it was the arthritis and assorted other ills—some real, most imagined—that had sapped her strength.

"So you're all done with the weatherization?" she asked, sipping the tea.

Donald smiled, "All finished."

"Took long enough. Two whole afternoons." She squinted up at him. "Your father was a lot handier than you. He'd have done it all in one day and had time to go fishing."

Donald set down his teacup and, struggling to stay calm, said, "Father was good at some things, I'm good at others."

"Your father was a good policeman, too," Mother grumbled. "Everyone in the neighborhood respected Big Bill Heidler. You could have been a decent policeman yourself, if you'd tried. It's what your father wanted, you know."

"I like being a cost analyst, Mother, believe it or not. I'm good at it. Besides, I took the police exam and failed."

"Hmmpf. On purpose, you failed. I know that."

"Believe what you want, Mother. I'm not going to argue with you." Donald stood up. "Anyway, I have to go. Angela and I are going out to dinner with another couple tonight and I have to get home and shower." He gulped down the rest of the tea and turned toward the kitchen door.

To his back, Mother cried, "You'll be back next Saturday, won't you, Donny Bear? You won't forget?"

"Do I ever forget, Mother? Do you ever let me forget?"

She let the remark pass. "Will I be able to turn up the thermostat a bit now, dear?"

"Yes, Mother. The house is as airtight as I can possibly make it. You should see a difference."

"I appreciate your volunteering to do the job, Donny, I really do." She was beginning to tire.

(continued on page 86)

# IMAGE IN A DARK GLASS



*Deep beneath the ruins of the city, where ancient myths still lived, he came face to face with . . . himself.*

by GARY KILWORTH

Even after two weeks away from the site, my room above Simi harbor was a sanctuary, not only from the heat reflected by the barren Greek island's mountains, but from society. The village was small, but there were still many tourists, curious and gregarious, and to be avoided. When James was out at the dig with the students and I was not required, I preferred to read or write in my room rather than sit at a *taverna*. Not that the room was anything special: the furnishings consisted of a table, chair, and bed, all with loosened joints, and on the walls a single, faded poster beside the cracked mirror (so necessary to the vanity of James when he called on me).

The morning was a particularly hot one, inducing more lethargy than usual in my movements. I dressed slowly in shorts and sleeveless shirt, breakfasted on tea and melon, then made my way down the uneven steps to the harbor below. Thence, through the back streets smelling of fish mingled with oregano and donkey droppings, to a goat track that led to the site. After twenty minutes of walking through the valley, the site came into view: a ruined Turkish fort jammed on the pate of a mound and looking like the misshapen crown of a brooding prince.

Beneath the fort was the second level, a castle built as an outpost of Rhodes by the Knights of St. John in the eleventh century. Below it were four

more levels—six, then, in all—with the promise of a seventh, each level holding a town or fortification from a different era. In the last century Schliemann had encountered a similar series of historical layers when digging for Troy. Schliemann the Butcher they had called him during my college days. Instead of sifting through each level, like a modern archaeologist, he had blasted his way down with explosives in his eagerness to get to the gold of Troy, destroying everything and anything that stood between him and the fabled city.

James was chatting to some students at the top of the dig. He smiled when he saw me: that easy grin he had for almost everyone except a rival.

"Hello, Leonard. Hot walk, eh? You should come up with me, in the early morning cool. The dawn is something to see here. Sun coming up behind that hill . . ." His dark eyes shone with enthusiasm, and one or two of the students nodded.

"See," he said, "they know. Some of them." There was laughter, directed at the laggards, like me, who found it difficult to stir before the day came to a boil. "Anyway, how was your trip to Athens? Get what we wanted?"

I nodded. "The equipment will be shipped in a few days. How have you been faring? Found anything new?"

James shrugged. "A few more pottery shards . . .

nothing significant." He put an arm around my shoulder and I felt the slight pressure as he indicated that we should move casually out of earshot of the students. A German girl (what was her name? Gaby?) smiled at me as she sipped her drink. They were a friendly bunch, and eager. Eager to help, eager to please. Casually, I accompanied James to the edge of the steep northern slope, where he stood looking down over the foothills to the clear, blue Mediterranean waters below.

"What?" I asked.

"We've reached it ... I've reached it. The seventh level ..."

"And?"

"Not much, not yet. Haven't had a chance to explore properly. Keep it from the others for a while, though. It's not so much another level as a natural system of limestone caves, underneath the lowest city."

I knew what he meant. I had been down to the sixth level. It was not a case of just dropping down vertically, like an elevator shaft. One had to move laterally on each level, find the passages, find the room, find the entrance to another level. We were cautious about our discoveries. It was not so much that we mistrusted our helpers, but ... well, if the prize is big enough, who *can* be trusted? One begins to find patriotic reasons for removing treasures for the benefit of one's own nation. When we had arrived at Simi it was not expected that the site would be as important as it subsequently turned out to be.

"No eighth level then?" I said.

James shook his head.

"Extremely doubtful. Seven is pre-Homeric. Maybe there's a Neolithic site, but it's doubtful. That's more likely to be down by the stream on the south side."

I agreed with him.

"So when do we get a good look at seven? Tonight?"

He nodded slowly. "Maybe. It's night down there all the time, so the hour is irrelevant. Leonard—" He looked at me straight in the eye. "I lied to you ... a few moments ago. I have found something."

"Okay," I smiled. "You're entitled to an aberration or two. You've done most of the work."

He looked a little distressed at my attitude.

"It's more serious than that. I really was going to keep it from you. I ... think I became greedy there, for a while. That's bad, isn't it? I want it for me alone."

I felt like a wronged wife at confession time, and the feeling was uncomfortable, to say the least.

"Forget it, James. You couldn't do it anyway. That's the important thing."

The boyish grin returned to his face and he looked relieved. James was twenty-seven, a year older than I, but I often felt like his father. If I ever

had a son, I hoped he would be like James in most respects.

"Well, spill the beans," I said.

"What? Oh! Oh yeah. Well, it isn't an ornamental pool. I haven't had chance to look at it properly yet, but it's obviously something important. The doors to the cavern—"

"Cavern?"

"Yeah. That thick ... Solid wood." He held his hands about two feet apart. "Probably cedar."

"How did you get in? Were they locked?"

"Yes. I ... I blew the lock."

"Hell, James." I was a little angry now.

"I know. Shades of Schliemann. Well, I got excited ... but I was careful, Leonard. Just enough for the job."

"I wasn't thinking of that. You could have caused a cave-in down there. You could have killed yourself."

"Well, I took a chance. I *had* to see behind those doors. You know what it's like, Leonard. It's another time. You feel you're all alone, no one but you in the whole world. Remember when you climbed up to the Turkish fort and stood on that pinnacle of rock? You told me later that you felt as if the world belonged only to you and the goats—all laws suspended. You were the supreme judge of what was right and wrong. If you did something, it was right because there was no one to counter your claims. Well, it was like that—without the goats."

"What did you use?"

"I had a little plastic with me ... for emergencies." He looked shamefaced, and I shook my head.

"Sometimes, James ..."

"I know. I know. You won't tell Cheryll? Promise me? Still—" he became enthusiastic—"it's such a strange place, Leonard. Marble surrounds. Mosaics. Rich in rock carvings. You should see it."

"I will, and I won't ... tell Cheryll, that is."

One of the students brought a bottle of wine over to us and I thanked him.

"You're welcome," he said. "Are we starting again soon?"

"Not long. A few more minutes."

He walked back to his friends. The accent had been a little musical. Dutch? Or perhaps Danish?

"Keen," said James. "They're all very, very keen."

"So were you as an undergraduate."

"I suppose so," he sighed.

I asked, "Is it a bath, do you think?"

He pursed his lips. "It's the wrong shape. I know not everyone was as fond of symmetry as the Romans, but this is ... I don't know, pond-shaped. The kind of pool you might find on a country walk, in the shade of some willows, under a line of poplars."

"You've been reading too much Housman," I said.

## IMAGE IN A DARK GLASS

"No, really. It is. Except that—its banks are smooth marble and there's a symbol cut into the surface of the marble."

"Did you recognize it?"

"Yes. A circle attached to a cross ... the mirror of Venus."

**W**e went back to the others after that and finished the wine with them. I was aware that alcohol would make them sleepy and a little careless, but most of them were moderate in their habits and I was no sergeant major with a rule book under one arm and a pace stick under the other. Those who overindulged were subtly assigned the heavy duties like shoring up the tunnels.

I stayed on for a while when the main work had been finished, as was my habit. I had the idea that I had to make up for the time I lost in the early mornings, though no one would have challenged me had I not done so. Before he left, James said in a low voice, "No trying it out for yourself. Wait for me. You don't know the way."

I nodded, thinking, *neither did you but you went anyway*, but I stayed on the fifth level, working in a room that had once been an armory. Two of the students stayed with me. James had to get to a telephone by six o'clock. He rang his fiancée in London every night to reaffirm his feelings for her. I thought it was sweet but a little unnecessary and expensive. Still, James was one of those men who need to show their affection. He was a romantic, and demonstrating love was, for him, the only proper behavior for a man who was in love. If I had heard Cheryl's name once, I had heard it a dozen times a day since we had been on Simi. He had made me promise that I would not tell her he had blown the lock on the doors to the pool. As if she, a dental assistant, would understand anyway. If he had told her it was the proper procedure, she would have believed him in her ignorance, little knowing that blasting one's way into an antiquity was tantamount to dynamiting a stubborn molar from a patient's jaw.

It was wonderfully quiet when the main body of the work force had gone. All I could hear was the clinking of trowels and an occasional murmur in German between my helpers. James was right, it was like being in another time. Above, around, and below me were cities of a former sun, streets and houses that had once been full of other races, other tongues. Proud tongues. The Dorian iron swords that I was carefully uncovering with my airbrush had been wielded by one set of my ancestors to kill another set of my ancestors. They were all part of me, predator and prey, attacker and defender, aggressor and underdog. Now I was moving through the labyrinth of tunnels that had once been their streets, crawling in the darkness where they had walked in light. Old cities, especially subsurface

ones, give me a funny feeling in my psyche. Their halls are not just inhabited by ghosts, they are crammed with them, wall to wall. You have to work in the artificial light of your helmet lamp with a roomful of attendant ghosts as thick as a London fog, watching your every painstaking move, as if ready to hand you the tools as you need them; further, should they witness some desecration, some invasion of sanctity, they might begin a mighty clamor, loud enough to drive you mad. Archaeologists who had emerged from underground sites with lunatic staring eyes, gibbering drivels, were not uncommon.

"Gute Nacht."

My German attendants left, but it was some while before James turned up, and I was a little annoyed with him when he explained that he had taken the time to have a haircut in the village. Why he had to look and dress so impeccably, on a place like Simi, was beyond me.

"Let's go," he said.

We began the trek down two more levels, the lamps on our helmets creating bizarre shadows in the lightless, unpeopled streets of a former nation. We tend to remember the Bronze Age as being populated by noble warriors, but the majority must have been fishermen, farmers, herdsmen, tradesmen, craftsmen ... and shopkeepers. These were their houses and their places of trade: the carpenter's workshop, the fishmongers' market, the grain merchant's storerooms. Our little army of students had uncovered many of the chambers until the whole hill was like a hollow honeycomb, with passages running laterally and horizontally.

We dropped down, through the floor of a wine merchant's shop, down again through the floor of his cellar by rope ladder, into the sixth level. Mycenaean era, circa 1400 to 1200 B.C. Then again along winding passages, through corridors of darkness almost as tangible as the stone that contained it. It seemed to me that the deeper we went, the thicker became the dark, as if it were an element that increased in density under pressure. Not just an absence of light, but a positive mass which threatened to suffocate us. The deeper we went, the hotter and more oppressive it became.

I followed James the last part of the way until we were in a system of natural limestone caves, improved upon, if that is the right phrase, by the use of tools and human craft. They were damp and glistened in the unnatural light of our miners' lamps. Underneath our feet the floor was undulated where flowing water had left ripples in the rock. The furrows were wide apart, which meant the flow was leisurely. At least we would not be swept away by floodwaters. If Mycenae was legend, we were now in the halls of pure mythology.

"Did you phone Cheryl?" I whispered, trying to introduce something mundane into the ancient

Unlike the warm friendliness  
of real trees in which one could  
detect woody faces  
amid the bark, these stone trees  
leered at me with sick expressions,  
cold and strangely evil.

atmosphere.

"Yes. She's okay. Looking forward to Christmas, of course."

His tone was blunted by the limestone walls around us, blocked by the timbers that supported our fragile honeycomb above. It had been a mistake to think that talk of ordinary matters would help remind me of an outside world, a here and now. It merely emphasized that we were deep in the bowels of another place entirely, the inner kingdom of the past, an age when gods were as numerous as mortals and their ranks as vast as the armies of men and women that served them. From the most insignificant naiad that presided over the smallest of springs to the mighty Zeus, they had shared an era with mankind: severed from becoming historical fact only by a faded belief in their actual existence.

"Here it is," said James, the light from his lamp picking out two great doors, slightly ajar but not wide enough for a man to enter. "They're stiff. I need your help to open them all the way." He gave me a sheepish grin and I shrugged. We both put our shoulders to one of the doors and gradually forced it open.

We entered a cavern, James had obviously been able to see through the gap but had not been strong enough to force his way inside. It smelt musty and old. I mentioned this to James, who replied, "When the charge blew the lock, the air came hissing out, as if it had been sealed since they were last closed. It stank ... Over three thousand years, after all ..."

"We'll have to be careful, James. Your charge might have weakened the supports in the level above—"

"You worry too much," he interrupted, almost brusquely. "Look, the pool! Apart from the quick glance I took through the gap in the doors, you and I are the first to see this ... since our old Greek friends. Out of respect for you I didn't even step inside. Let's do it in style, kid." He did a sort of half-skip through the doorway and cried, "Tra-da-da!" with one arm outstretched, as if introducing a guest on a television program.

"Fool," I said, not unkindly.

His lamp light swept over the dark, glittering

surface of the water. It was a black mirror. A tossed stone might shatter it like glass, and it held me fascinated while the light was played back and forth over its dead, still flatness. Around it were statues, seemingly carved out of the base marble that held the pool in its smooth hollow, but not statues of people or animals, not even of mythological beasts, but of trees, bushes, and flowers. A petrified glade. Each tiny leaf, each petal, was finely wrought, each twig, each branch frozen in the act of submitting to some bygone breeze of ancient days. There were even trampled patches of sculptured grass, and the spoor of deer at the edge of the pool where they had dipped their heads to drink. I was riveted to the sight. It frightened me for some reason—a fear my mind had extracted from the very roots of racial memory. It was an instinctive fear, irrational and without a name. These stone blossoms had a grey coldness that robbed them of any comparison, beyond a superficial resemblance, to real blooms. They were the brittle crustaceans of a tomb to a dead world. The trunks of the trees were ugly. Unlike the warm friendliness of real trees in which one could detect woody faces amid the knots and whorls in the bark, these stone trees leered at me with sick expressions, cold and strangely evil. The effect was weird beyond explanation. I was drained of all comprehension. Why?

"Tremendous, isn't it?" breathed James. I could feel his hand on my shoulder. "You can see why I was ... well, why I nearly cut you out of it. I wanted it all for myself. Fame. This hunger in archaeologists for recognition, for the one great discovery. It almost ruined a perfect friendship ..."

The last two words were delivered frivolously, I suspect because of embarrassment, but I was hardly paying attention. When I moved my head the shadows of trees with marble leaves danced upon mottled stone banks.

"Even the water looks as if it's made of slate," I said.

James suddenly bent and dipped a finger in the pool. Velvet rings rippled across the surface.

"Real water," he chuckled.

"Yes, but ... where did it ... how did it get here? There's no stream in here. The roof looks dry. This whole scene just doesn't make sense, James."

His voice took on a hard tone.

"What the hell are you talking about? It's here, isn't it? And I ... we found it. Leonard, that fanciful imagination of yours is going to cost us one day. This is *real*. Get a grip on yourself."

A reversal of roles: he was now the father figure and I full of misgivings and forebodings. Why was I giving way to mild hysteria? I was usually the strong, dependable one, the calm assessor of factual evidence ...

Facts? The facts were these: we were in a chamber that, contrary to most of our honeycomb of

## IMAGE IN A DARK GLASS

cities, was free of soil; there was a pool of water in its center, yet there was no inlet; surrounding the pool was a petrified glade.

"Let's go back now, James," I said. "I think I've seen enough. We can—"

"Wait a minute. I want to look around a bit first. You go, if you're unhappy here. I'll be okay."

From a distance, I stared at the dark, inviting surface of the pool and then moved further away. A thought had slipped into my mind, had been sidling its way in ever since we had entered the chamber.

"Why did you do that? Back off like that?" he said.

"I ... don't want to look into the pool."

"You're crazy, Leonard. What's the matter with you? It's only water, for Christ's sake."

"Is it?"

"I think it is. You have obviously have some ... some cranky idea in your head about—I don't know what. What is it? Witchcraft? Something like that? What?"

"Older."

"Older than what? Witchcraft?"

"Yes."

"You really have flipped, man."

I stepped outside the chamber and left him to it. My legs were trembling slightly and I felt hot. I wanted to light a cigarette, but the air was thin enough down there as it was, without burning up oxygen. It was then that I heard it, a rumble from further down the passage.

"James!"

I began running as the rumble increased in volume, until a thunderous crash echoed along the tunnel. Dust filled the air and I fell to my knees, choking in its thick clouds. I heard the screech of timber against timber and felt reverberations shake the floor beneath me. I scrambled to my feet, stumbling forward, and walked into a wall of wood, earth, and stone. As the dust began to clear, my helmet lamp picked out the huge blocks that had once served as a wall on the level above. Shoring timbers from the upper tunnels were mangled and split, wedged between me and the outside world. I began tearing at the blockage in panic, filling my palms with splinters, screaming, "James, Help me! James! James!" Finally, I backed away from the collapse, realizing that my individual efforts were ineffectual. I needed James to clear it with me, and he still had not come.

All the claustrophobic feelings of childhood rose to my throat then. I remembered a locked cupboard at a birthday party, with me on the inside; a sand tunnel I had dug in the dunes on a beach which collapsed on me, my father having to dig me out with frantic haste; a vehicle accident as an adolescent, with me trapped in the driver's seat, upside-down on a lone highway at night. Everyone has one or two experiences during their lifetime, where they have

been trapped in an enclosed space in the darkness. The panic was impossible to control. It was not the sort of terror, at that moment, that induces high action brought on by rushing adrenalin—it was the kind that freezes the victim into immobility. I stared at the pile of rubble before me. It could have been a mountain and there was not enough faith in me to move a muscle, let alone a barrier of rock and earth. I think I was whimpering for a while. Gradually, the fear began to dissipate until I was at least able to think with some resemblance to reasoning.

I waited a long time for James to join me—a long time. Finally, I found the courage to go back inside the room again. His helmet was lodged in the stone branches of a tree, spotlighting him as he knelt by the pool. He was staring at the still surface. I walked up to him and looked down on his handsome reflection, his classical features. It was a fine face, a face I felt I had always admired.

"James?"

He remained unmoved, as if he were unaware of my presence. He only had eyes for himself.

"James, there's been a collapse, you must have heard it. We have to clear it before we can get out. They don't know we're down here. We'll ... suffocate if we don't find a way through. The air pumps—they can't reach us."

He did not even acknowledge my presence. It was as if he had hypnotized himself. I knelt beside him, my own eyes drawn to his reflection in the water.

"James, you know the story. You know how it ended? You must remember what happened to Narcissus ..."

He gave no answer.

"James, what about Cheryl? I'm ... think of Cheryl."

For a long time I stood there, sharing the vision of his mirror image with him. I avoided looking at my own face; but his—his was magnetic. I studied every line: the curve of his jaw; the dark eyes, set wide; the prominent cheekbones; the narrow nose and smooth brow. There was a stirring in my breast which I fought to keep at bay. I had lived with a lack of fulfillment all my life, and now ... was I now to die with it?

With great effort I managed to urge him again to clear our path to the next level.

"We can't sit here doing nothing," I said. "I need you ... to help me."

Finally, without looking up, he allowed me three words, delivered in a tone half-bored, half-irritated.

"Go away, Leonard," he said.

When the lamps went out, some seven hours later, I crawled away and somehow managed to burrow between the timbers and rock, like a mole. It was too late for James. His hand had been colder than flesh, and harder—much harder. (7)

# AND THE DUTCHMAN DOCKED AT ROTTERDAM



When two  
legendary wanderers  
meet at last,  
it's special day.

A very special day.

by RICHARD H. FAWCETT

**O**n a wooden bench near the docks an old man watched from beneath his broad-rimmed hat as an ancient weather-beaten sailing ship glided silently to its berth. A curious crowd had gathered at the quayside, attracted to the peculiar phenomenon of an old sailing ship amidst a host of modern vessels—cabin cruisers, freighters, and other larger craft. Caught up in the festive mood that this incongruous event seemed to generate, a number of onlookers took the occasion to cast aspersions upon the old sea captain as he hobbled ashore from his disreputable craft. He proved to be a frayed, seedy-looking figure, as sorry in appearance as his ship.

But the old seaman ignored the crowd. Pur-

posefully his tired gaze swept the dockside until it came to rest upon the first old man, who for the moment continued unmoved, silently watching the activities like one long schooled in the virtues of patience.

As the light-hearted, laughing crowd parted, the two ancients began their slow, steady walk toward one another across the intervening space. They were, perhaps, fifteen feet apart when the ominous wail of an air-raid siren shattered the scene.

Those closest to the two old men had just enough time to hear a brief conversation:

"Well, old Jew, how goes it with you?"

To which the Jew replied, "Not too badly Dutchman. Are you ready?"



# THE MALICE OF INANIMATE OBJECTS

by M.R. JAMES

*A chilling little cautionary tale,  
never before published here,  
by the English ghost story's master  
of understatement.*

Amongst writers of supernatural fiction, Montague Rhodes James (1862–1936) is generally accorded a place in the first rank. His reputation is high with critics and enthusiasts as well as with general readers, for whom James's career as an ecclesiastical scholar—one of the most distinguished of his generation—means little or nothing. In recent years James's stories have been televised, broadcast, filmed, and recorded, and the popular imagination now ranks him as one of those "masters of the macabre," like Poe or Bram Stoker.

M.R. James was born on August 1, 1862, at Goodnestone, near Wingham in Kent, the fourth child and youngest son of the Reverend Herbert James, a scholarly clergyman with strong links with the Evangelical wing of the Church of England. In 1865 the family left Kent for Livermere in Suffolk, where the rectory was to remain home for "Monty" until 1919. After

preparatory school he was awarded a scholarship to Eton, an institution to which he gave his deepest loyalty and devotion. From there he went on to King's College, Cambridge, becoming in due succession Dean, Tutor, and finally Provost of the college. At the end of the First World War he returned to Eton as its Provost. He thus passed virtually his entire adult life within the confines of the ancient colleges founded by King Henry VI, dying at Eton on June 12, 1936.

As a scholar, James's interests centered on Western manuscripts; apocryphal literature and biblical studies; medieval art, architecture, and iconography; and to a lesser extent, classical archaeology and literature. His knowledge in these areas was immense, almost legendary, and was put to good use when he came to create convincing backgrounds and narrative details for his ghost stories—amongst the enthusiastic readers of



Illustration by Paula Goodman

which were Thomas Hardy and Theodore Roosevelt.

The first volume of stories appeared in 1904 as *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary*. This was followed by *More Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* (1911), *A Thin Ghost* (1919), *A Warning to the Curious* (1925), and, in 1931, the *Collected Ghost Stories*, which is still in print—a rare distinction for this type of so-called ephemeral literature.

Two stories were known to have appeared after the publication of the collected edition: "The Experiment" (*Morning Post*, December 31, 1931) and "A Vignette," posthumously published in the *London Mercury* in 1936, which draws on James's childhood at Livermere.

There is now a third. In 1932 James compiled an incomplete list of his published writings at the back of an annotated Greek Testament whose interleaves served him as a rudimentary diary. During the preparation of my biography of James, I consulted the diary on several occasions and was puzzled by an item that seemed to indicate a connection with the ghost stories. The entry in question was "The Malice of Inanimate Objects," and there was a reference to "Masquerade." Investigation revealed the existence of an Etonian ephemeral magazine called *The Masquerade*, the first number of which appeared in June 1933. There were two copies extant in the college library. On pages 29 through 32 was a short ghost story, "The Malice of Inanimate Objects" by M.R. James, who was then Provost of Eton.

It is, to be sure, far from being one of James's best stories, and shows every indication of having been written hastily, perhaps in response to a request for a tale from the editors of *The Masquerade*. But it is nonetheless an interesting addition to the corpus of perhaps the greatest modern ghost story writer, and I am delighted to have been given this opportunity to introduce it to American readers.

I am grateful to Patrick Strong, College Archivist at Eton, for his help in tracking down the story, and to Nicholas Rhodes James for allowing it to be reprinted.

—Michael Cox

**T**he Malice of Inanimate Objects is a subject upon which an old friend of mine was fond of dilating, and not without justification. In the lives of all of us, short or long, there have been days, dreadful days, on which we have had to acknowledge with gloomy resignation that our world has turned against us. I do not mean the human world of our relations and friends: to enlarge on that is the province of nearly every modern novelist. In their books it is called "Life" and an odd enough hash it is as they portray it. No, it is the world of things that do not speak or work or hold congresses and conferences. It includes such beings as the collar stud, the inkstand, the fire, the razor, and, as age increases, the extra step on the staircase which leads you either to expect or not to expect it. By these and such as these (for I have named but the merest fraction of them) the word is passed around, and the day of misery arranged. Is the tale still remembered

of how the Cock and the Hen went to play a visit to Squire Korbes? How on the journey they met with and picked up a number of associates, encouraging each with the announcement:

"To Squire Korbes we are going  
For a visit is owing."

Thus they secured the company of the Needle, the Egg, the Duck, the Cat, possibly—for memory is a little treacherous here—and finally the Millstone: and when it was discovered that Squire Korbes was for the moment out, they took up positions in his mansion and awaited his return. He did return, wearied no doubt by a day's work among his extensive properties. His nerves were first jarred by the raucous cry of the Cock. He threw himself into his armchair and was lacerated by the Needle. He went to the sink for a refreshing wash and was splashed all over by the Duck. Attempting to dry himself with the towel he broke the Egg upon his face. He suffered other indignities from the Hen and her accomplices, which I cannot now recollect, and finally, maddened with pain and fear, rushed out by the back door and had his brains dashed out by the Millstone that had perched itself in the appropriate place. "Truly," in the concluding words of the story, "this Squire Korbes must have been either a very wicked or a very unfortunate man." It is the latter alternative which I incline to accept. There is nothing in the preliminaries to show that any slur rested on his name, or that his visitors had any injury to avenge. And will not this narrative serve as a striking example of the Malice of which I have taken upon me to treat? It is, I know, the fact that Squire Korbes's visitors were not all of them, strictly speaking, inanimate. But are we sure that the perpetrators of this Malice are really inanimate either? There are tales which seem to justify a doubt.

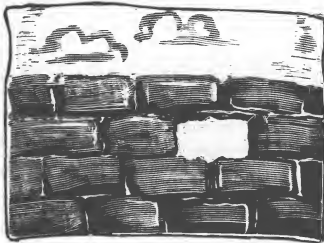
Two men of mature year were seated in a pleasant garden after breakfast. One was reading the day's paper, the other sat with folded arms, plunged in thought, and on his face were a piece of sticking plaster and lines of care. His companion lowered his paper. "What," said he, "is the matter with you? The morning is bright, the birds are singing, I can hear no aeroplanes or motor bikes."

"No," replied Mr. Burton, "it is nice enough, I agree, but I have a bad day before me. I cut myself shaving and spilt my tooth powder."

"Ah," said Mr. Manners, "some people have all the luck," and with this expression of sympathy he reverted to his paper. "Hullo," he exclaimed, after a moment, "here's George Wilkins dead! You won't have any more bother with him, anyhow."

"George Wilkins?" said Mr. Burton, more than a little excitedly. "Why, I didn't even know he was ill."

"No more he was, poor chap. Seems to have thrown up the sponge and put an end to himself."



Yes," he went on, "it's some days back: this is the inquest. Seemed very much worried and depressed, they say. What about, I wonder? Could it have been that will you and he were having a row about?"

"I don't know," said Mr. Manners, "he was a man, I thought, who did take things hard: they rankled. Well, I'm sorry, though I never saw much of him. He must have gone through a lot to make him cut his throat. Not the way I should choose, by a long sight. Ugh! Lucky he hadn't a family, anyhow. Look here, what about a walk round before lunch? I've an errand in the village."

Mr. Burton assented rather heavily. He was perhaps reluctant to give the inanimate objects of the district a chance of getting at him. If so, he was right. He just escaped a nasty purl over the scraper at the top of the steps: a thorny branch swept off his hat and scratched his fingers, and as they climbed a grassy slope he fairly leapt into the air with a cry and came down flat on his face. "What in the world?" said his friend coming up. "A great string, of all things! What business—Oh, I see—belongs to the kite" (which lay on the grass a little farther up). "Now if I can find out what little beast has left that kicking about, I'll let him have it—or rather I won't, for he shan't see his kite again. It's rather a good one, too." As they approached, a puff of wind raised the kite and it seemed to sit upon its end and look at the them with two large round eyes painted red, and, below them, three large printed red letters, I.C.U. Mr. Manners was amused and scanned the device with care. "Ingenious," he said, "it's a bit off a poster, of course: I see! Full Particulars, the word was." Mr. Burton on the other hand was not amused, but thrust his stick through the kite. Mr. Manners was inclined to regret this. "I dare say it serves him right," he said, "but he'd taken a lot of trouble to make it."

"Who had?" said Mr. Burton sharply. "Oh, I see, you mean the boy."

"Yes, to be sure, who else? But come on down now: I want to leave a message before lunch." As they turned a corner into the main street, a rather muffled and choky voice was heard to say, "Look out! I'm coming." They both stopped as if they had been shot.

"Who was that?" said Manners. "Blest if I didn't

think I knew"—then, with almost a yell of laughter he pointed with his stick. A cage with a grey parrot in it was hanging in an open window across the way. "I was startled, by George: it gave you a bit of a turn, too, didn't it?" Burton was inaudible. "Well I shan't be a minute: you can go and make friends with the bird." But when he rejoined Burton, that unfortunate was not, it seemed, in trim for talking with either birds or men; he was some way ahead and going rather quickly. Manners paused for an instant at the parrot window and then hurried on laughing more than ever. "Have a good talk with Polly?" said he, as he came up.

"No, of course not," said Burton, testily. "I didn't bother about the beastly thing."

"Well, you wouldn't have got much out of her if you'd tried," said Manners. "I remembered after a bit; they've had her in the window for years: she's stuffed." Burton seemed about to make a remark, but suppressed it.

Decidedly this was not Burton's day out. He choked at lunch, he broke a pipe, he tripped in the carpet, he dropped his book in the pond in the garden. Later on he had or professed to have a telephone call summoning him back to town next day and cutting short what should have been a week's visit. And so glum was he all the evening that Manners's disappointment in losing an ordinarily cheerful companion was not very sharp.

At breakfast Mr. Burton said little about his night: but he did intimate that he thought of looking in on his doctor. "My hand's so shaky," he said, "I really daren't shave this morning."

"Oh, I'm sorry," said Mr. Manners, "my man could have managed that for you: but they'll put you right in no time."

Farewells were said. By some means and for some reason Mr. Burton contrived to reserve a compartment to himself. (The train was not of the corridor type.) But these precautions avail little against the angry dead.

I will not put dots or stars. for I dislike them, but I will say that apparently someone tried to shave Mr. Burton in the train, and did not succeed overly well. He was however satisfied with what he had done, if we may judge from the fact that on a once white napkin spread on Mr. Burton's chest was an inscription in red letters: GEO. W. FECI.

Do not these facts—if facts they are—bear out my suggestion that there is something not inanimate behind the Malice of Inanimate Objects? Do they not further suggest that when this malice begins to show itself we should be very particular to examine and if possible rectify any obliquities in our recent conduct? And do they not, finally, almost force upon us the conclusion that, like Squire Korbes, Mr. Burton must have been either a very wicked or a singularly unfortunate man? 12



# SNOW BLIND

*It was as inevitable as  
the passing of the seasons:  
love ... marriage ... and murder.*

by PETER HEYRMAN

**T**he day had the pallor of dead flesh. The air was bitter cold, and the sky stretched grey from horizon to horizon. The matted grass had faded until it was almost colorless. Amy drove through the dreary landscape, then up into the hills. She wasn't eager to get home. A car rushed up, hung behind her for a moment, then flashed its lights. Amy suddenly realized that she was going only thirty miles per hour in a forty-five-mile zone. Cursing, she pulled over. The car zoomed by, almost sideswiping her.

"Yeah, thanks a lot," she muttered. She slowed down even more, waiting for the next impatient bastard to ride down on her tail. No one came. The road was empty; too empty.

A few snowflakes hit the windshield. More followed, and the white stuff swirled around her. It was a rotten break. Snow would mean being cooped up with Jake for a couple of days. Once she might have looked forward to being snowbound with her husband, but that was long past. Things had changed between them. She squeezed her eyes shut, then opened them wide.

"Damn!" she muttered again.

"You're doing all this to yourself," he'd said in his nervous tone. Amy felt as if Jake were sitting next to her in the car, his hands fussing. "You really

# SNOW BLIND

ought to get help, Amy. Dr. Mulsen<sup>2</sup> is ready to see you, and he's supposed to be the best."

"The hell with you! I don't need a doctor."

"You shouldn't be so testy, and why don't you drive the speed limit? Going too slow is just as dangerous as speeding."

"Jake, shut up." Her hands gripped the wheel.

"I'm just saying—"

"Shut up. I don't need a goddamn mother either."

She tried to push Jake's image out of her mind.

The snow thickened, whitening the grey world. Amy sped up a little, wanting to get home before it got too bad. Fifteen minutes later her car climbed the hill where they lived. She reached the two-acre clearing and turned in at the driveway. The snow was so dense she could barely make out the outline of the house until she drove right up to it. She could see Jake's shadow in the living room window. Then he was gone. She drove the car into the garage, then went through the rec room to the steps. When she got upstairs she saw his tall, cadaverous form in the kitchen. He was sautéing something, throwing in spices.

At least he's good for something, she thought. She had to admit that Jake was a damned good cook. Lately he had been getting even better. He glanced at her. His eyes were distant, as if something had faded from them during the day. She did her best to smile.

"Hi, dear."

"Hello." His tone was aloof. *The hell with him*, she thought. He kept loading in the spices. She went to the living room and poured a drink. Funny, she thought, he'd usually make some kind of remark by now. If he didn't want to talk it suited Amy fine. If they could go through a blizzard without saying a word it might even be tolerable. As she finished her drink, the silence was broken.

"Dinner's ready."

She went into the dining room. Her place was already set for her. Jake put a plate in front of her without a word. She studied his face. He seemed lost in thought, an odd state for him. He ignored her and picked up a fork. The meal was some sort of beef and noodle dish with sautéed vegetables. She couldn't identify the spices, but the meal was the best she'd had yet. She'd forgotten how hungry she was. She shoveled the food into her mouth greedily.

"I'll do the dishes," she offered.

"Of course." She didn't like the tone in his voice. After she was done and was coming from the kitchen, she saw him standing by the window with a drink in his hand. He finished the drink and set the glass on the sill. She recognized the glass. It was from one of her favorite sets.

"Looks like it'll be quite a blow," he said.

"I think so."

"Did they predict it?"

"I don't know," she said. "I didn't hear it if they did."

"I like snow."

"You never told me that," she said.

"It makes the world so quiet. On a still night after a snow has fallen, every sound is absorbed. There are no echoes, no disturbances."

"I've never thought about it like that."

"Later tonight, step out on the front porch and listen."

"We might be snowed in by then."

"Yes . . . we might." He lit a cigarette.

"Do you have to smoke?"

"After a meal, I like it." He turned to her and smiled. "Just a few puffs, dear, then I'll put it out." He did what he had said. He'd barely smoked a third of the cigarette when he stubbed it out in the black ashtray. "Now was that so bad?"

"You bastard. I'm not going to let you bait me."

She turned to go toward the stairs, then whirled and stared at him. "What makes you so goddamn calm tonight?"

His eyes twinkled. "What makes you so angry?"

"You do. You never fail."

"At least I'm successful at something." She left him grinning after her.

She went upstairs and turned on the television in the den. The picture was fuzzy. She wondered if snow was affecting the cable. Soon there was no picture at all, and the voices were nothing more than garbled remnants of speech. She switched it off and picked up a book, but tired of it fast and put it down. For nearly an hour she did nothing but sit still and stare at the wood paneling of the wall.

The door opened. "You should step out on the porch now. You'll see what I mean by quiet."

She sighed. "All right." She came downstairs with him. He'd built a fire in the fireplace. Only one dim lamp was on, casting long shadows across the room.

"Let me help you with your coat," he said. He held it as she draped it around herself. They stepped outside.

"Why don't you go back in and turn on the porch light?" she asked.

"It's better dark," he whispered. "Listen."

Snow was falling, but the wind had died. The next house down couldn't be seen; the white flakes hid it. Even the woods were hardly visible. It was quiet, the most quiet she'd ever known. A blanket of whiteness closed down the world, and all sounds were absorbed into the frozen night. She couldn't even hear her breath, or his. A moment later she realized she hadn't been breathing. She inhaled deeply.

"Why are you so calm tonight, so solicitous?"

"Should I be any other way?" He sounded like a different man.

"I'm not sure I like it."

"You shouldn't."

She turned on him. "What's that supposed to mean?"

**He touched the small of her back.**

**It was like an icicle probing her.**

**The whole room  
stank of his rotten breath.**

He smiled. "There's no reason for you to like me. There's not any reason for you to trust me. Think about it, Amy."

"I'm not going to think about anything. I'm going to bed." She marched past him into the house, then stalked up the stairs. Twenty minutes later she was in bed. It took an hour for her to sleep. Later she awakened and felt him next to her. His skin was cold. She moved away from him.

When she woke again, it was still dark. A frozen index finger was sliding from her brow, over her nose, across her lips, onto her neck.

"Please, Jake, I'm not in the mood."

His voice came from the blackness. "Not in the mood for what?" His breath was putrid. She shuddered.

"Not in the mood for anything from you."

"Come now—"

"Jake, I mean it. Now leave me alone." She sat bolt upright, brushing his hand aside. He touched the small of her back. It was like an icicle probing her. The whole room stunk of his rotten breath. "Damn it, Jake."

"You don't have to call me that anymore. I'm not even sure I am Jake now."

"Yeah, now you're sounding like yourself again." She threw off the covers and got up. "Christ! What a damn fool." She left the room and went downstairs to pour herself a drink. As she stood at the kitchen window sipping it, she could see a hint of greyness tinting the world outside. There would be no dawn today. There would only be the slowly sifting light oozing through the blizzard of white flakes.

She heard the padding footsteps of her husband on the stairs. She let out a disgusted breath, then poured herself another drink. She walked back to the window. Though she didn't hear him, she saw his reflection in the glass. He was nearly as grey as the morning. He came closer, his face just over her ear.

"What do you want?" she asked.

"You."

"Go to hell!"

His hands clapped around her neck. At first they were loose. She reached for them.

"What're you doing now, Jake?"

He didn't say a word. He began to squeeze. His fingers were hard, rigid things closing around her

throat. She tried to scream. Nothing came. She grabbed the fingers, then kicked wildly. She hit a knee. He buckled. The grip weakened. She broke it and ran. She got to the phone, picked it up, and mashed the "O" button.

"Operator," she gasped. "God damn it, operator! Operator, do you hear me? My husband's trying to kill me!"

"It's not going to help. The phone's dead." The voice came from behind her. She felt like an ice statue. No sound came from the receiver. She dropped it to the floor. She heard him speak.

"It's dead, isn't it? Of course it is. We can't let a phone come between us, Amy. It's silent, just like the world outside. All the sounds are lost in the snow."

She felt him behind her and smelled his breath, nearly choking on it. She whirled to see his face before her, mouth grim. She reached up, but the cold steel in his hand had already pierced her heart. Her head drooped; quietly she crumpled to the floor.

**A**n hour later a plainclothes cop walked into the room. There were already several men working there. He spoke to the doctor.

"What's it look like?"

The doctor looked up at him. "No way to be sure yet, but it looks to me like a heart attack—massive coronary."

"You see the body upstairs?"

"The one in bed? I saw him. He's been dead for a while."

"Yeah, I could tell. Smells like at least a day. Funny thing is, it looks like she slept up there last night."

"Slept with a corpse?"

"That's right. Did you see the dinner table?" the cop asked.

"No."

"She made dinner for two last night. She ate hers, and left the other one sitting there uneaten. Both plates are still there. What do you make of that?"

"It could have been some kind of psychotic reaction. Do you think she killed him?" the doctor asked.

"I think so. It looked to me like she garroted him in his sleep, then went to work yesterday as usual. When she got home she started getting funny. The phone operator said the woman was screaming something about her husband trying to kill her."

The doctor gazed down at the stiff body. "Whatever happened, she took it with her."

"Damn," the cop muttered. "I hate cases like this."

He paced to the window and stared out at the world. "Well, at least one thing's good today."

The doctor walked over and stood next to the cop. Together they surveyed the sunlight on the greening grass and tulips.

"Thank God for spring."

# SIDE TRACKED

He was going to punish the sinner, and he would not be deterred. The chains would see to that.

by ROGER F. DUNKLEY

So that's it. It's decided. And suddenly I feel good. Free. Chained—and free! As if these clean, blue skies are in my head. Pure breezes blowing through my mind. I haven't felt like this for ages. Not since it all happened.

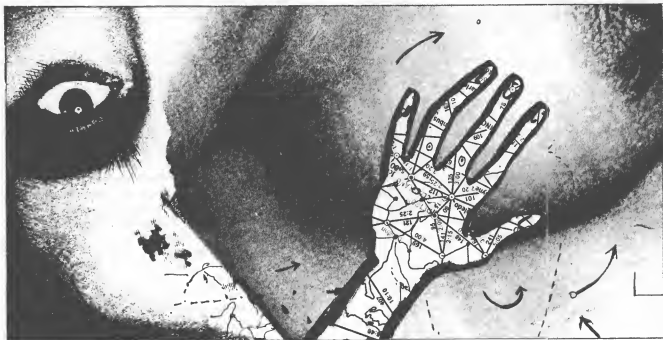
Weak-willed, indecisive: those were her words, the wife's words. Painful. And true. Right on the proverbial nail. Each nail banged home, dear Christ. True up till now, that is. Now things'll change and won't she know it! She'll see the proof. There'll be no more of her mockery. No more accusations. No more sin.

And no more guilt.

Not that I only blame myself. I blame them,

too. The designers, the advertisers. All those unnatural snug-fit, cuddle-tight, stretch-fiber fabrics. It's inflammatory. Those jeans clinging and hugging in front of you on the escalator; reaching up, cheek shifting to cheek, for the sliced peaches on the top shelf in the supermarket; bending and balancing to do up the kiddies' trainers in the park. All that sinuous movement just an arm's reach—a hand's grasp—away. To have and to hold. I mean, they don't help cement a marriage. They don't concentrate a man's energies on conjugal responsibility. They don't exactly put a fifty-megaton boost under his will power.

But it's only instinct, only natural, says this voice. Don't get me wrong now. I don't hear the voices! So you needn't nod sagely and write that



Illustrations by Peter Kuper

down in your medical jotters. My marbles are still entirely in my ownership. That voice and I are old familiars. I know the ancient whisper of the Tempter by now. Give in, it says. It's a natural human appetite. No! Don't you believe it. One track mind, the wife calls it. One track! That's rich, when you think ... and she's right. Natural, human excuses for an unnatural, animal obsession. Lead me not into temptation. There's the rub. The snares of the Tempter. He's subtle, cunning. The snares are everywhere.

Even on the Northern Line. Especially on the Northern Line. Between Tottenham Court Road and the Oval. That, you might say, is where I met it — my Waterloo. Met *her*. Time: summer rush hour. Scene: carriage overrun with brollies, newspapers, dutiful, pin-striped husbands, and earnest students buried in Russian novels that would outlast a lifetime on the Circle Line. There I stood, victim-sinner; there she lurked, satanic dolly-bait, disguised as nineteen-year-old temp, cling-wrapped in latest mind-stretch, figure-fit fashion. Both protagonists thrust together, thigh to thigh. Flung together, briefcase to Kleenex-stuffed shoulder-bag, in life's tube as it swayed and rattled into the depths of Tooting Bec. I planted my feet, held my legs, everything, rigid; she abandoned herself brazenly to the swinging of the train. Closer. Plump, curving thighs. Closer. A thrust, an underground lunge. Nearer still nearer, oh, God. Snares everywhere. Oh Lord, deliver us. And she knew. Looking the other way. Pretending to study the address of the nearest Alfred Marks Bureau. Cheeks flushed. Lips pouting. She knew.

Then: contact. I did it. It did it — this hand, this damned hand, this treacherous clutch of fingers! No consultation with head office, the moral centers. No panted "By your leave." No breathless request — "can I give you a hand?" — even. Just a base, animal reflex.

A stretching of the fingers, a cupping of the palm, and I waited.

Contact! Warm, yielding contact.

Simple lust.

Satanic lust, of course. The wife's right. Even the devil can wear a dirty mac. If you're an upright man — upright, indeed! — a God-fearing man, you'll make amends, she said.

She got out, the girl, at Balham. Bountiful Balham. No protest. No thanks. No backward glance. She just took that nubile body and walked it away out of my life. Never knowing what she'd started.

If she could see me now. Lying here. Staring up at that blinding sun. No furtive, groping darkness here. No sweating nightmares. I stare up now into a light that blazes, sweet and pure, into the grubbier soul. It's good. Not comfortable, but good. Purifying. The gravel bites into the back of course. And the wrist hurts a bit. That's to be expected. A bit of pain.

A bit of pain! Christ.

Don't think. The weakness of the flesh. I hesi-



tate long enough. Too long, she said. I've had time to think, sitting in those sad seats from Mill Hill to Morden. Grappling with temptation as the train chuntered through the screaming dark. Hell-bent. Clenching my fists till the blood wet my palms, suffering those bouncing typists and dark, private agonies in the tunnels of Kentish Town.

No more.

I'm proving it to her now. No more hesitation. No more weakness — of will or flesh. No more guilt, or sin.

It's coming. A shivering along the earth. Everything's in place.

No more recriminations.

I can hear it now, lumbering closer. Monstrous. I can feel it clearly; the wrist's trembling. The decision's made. Irreversible.

Sunshine floods my eyes. Tears. Beeches climb the sky, green and innocent. Purity, at last.

The chain tingles. A last tug. Test? Escape? The padlock holds, ruthless. The key lies where I threw it in those bushes near my head — on the other side of the world. I must lie clear, at full stretch. In safety. There must be no accidents, not now.

I can flex my fingers, cup my palm, grasp — you might say — my destiny. Squinting sidelong, I can see the pulse of blood in my veins, pale, delicate blue, standing out on my wrist where it's arched back over the iron rail, clamped down firm and final.

The track sings and shudders. The train's come into sight. Dear God, are you watching?

Weak-willed? Sunk in sin? Now she'll know.

She can never taunt or doubt me again.

For it is clear. It is written.

"If thy hand offend thee, cut it off and cast it from thee ..."

So that's it. It's decided.

And here the train comes thundering out of the blinding sun. 17



# Rod Serling's

The stories, said Serling, ranged  
"from tongue-in-cheek to foot-in-grave"  
—and one of them caused a lot of trouble  
for a young whippersnapper named Spielberg.

# Night Gallery

by KATHRYN M. DRENNAN and J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI

Although the concluding half of *Night Gallery's* trial six-week season was written totally by Rod Serling—five original tales and two adaptations of short stories by other authors—the quality of the segments varied widely.

For Serling, the lowest point of that whole first season was reached on January 6, 1971, when the two segments "Make Me Laugh" and "Clean Kills and Other Trophies" aired back to back.

The first aired was "Make Me Laugh," a serio-comic piece about a down-and-out comic who makes a deal with a magical guru.

"It's really a piece of crap," Serling said later. "It almost single-handedly brought back vaudeville."

Serling's script had been based on one of his own short stories, and he liked the story. The cast was another matter altogether. Jackie Vernon, in his first dramatic role, moves gracelessly and without a shred of emotion through a role meant to elicit sympathy and a sense of strangeness. And Godfrey Cambridge, a well-known comic with his own brand of humor, was miscast in a part written specifically for a very fat, very Jewish Catskills comic originally named Jacob Slatksy.

Thanks to Marc Scott Zicare for additional research.

Putting these actors through their paces was Universal's wunderkind, twenty-three-year-old director Steven Spielberg. Having already worked on the *Night Gallery* tv movie, and with *Night Gallery* series producer Jack Laird on another series, *The Psychiatrist*, Spielberg seemed a logical choice.

But from the moment NBC saw the first footage, their reaction to the segment was more vehement than Serling's.

"They hated it!" says MCA/Universal president Sid Sheinberg, then head of Universal Television—and Spielberg's mentor. "Whether or not the segment should ever have been made begs the question. They absolutely hated it, and they called the people who were producing the show and demanded that Spielberg be removed."

"It was a horrendous circumstance. As a matter of fact, it was the only time in all the years I ran MCA television that the network insisted a guy be replaced. Not only didn't they like the work he was doing, they ordered me never to use him again on anything. It was a very jarring experience, not only for me, but for Steven."

Most of the criticism, and the demand for Spielberg's removal, came from one particular—and still unnamed—NBC executive. "There's no sense vilifying him, since it's so many years ago. He was basically a good guy who was just terribly wrong,"

Sheinberg says. "I think that part of this had to do with the fact that you had this young whippersnapper who was getting all this attention."

Although parts of "Make Me Laugh" were retouched by others, Spielberg's work was substantial enough to assure that he received sole director's credit. As for NBC's request, Sheinberg says. "We never took the demand very seriously. We told them they didn't have the right to tell us who to use and who not to use."

So Spielberg continued to direct for Universal, although he would never do another *Night Gallery*.

The second segment that night was "Clean Kills and Other Trophies," A story about manhood, rifles, and the degree to which they may exclude one another, its point was, perhaps, pushed a little too strongly. "It happens to represent an area of concern that I have," said Serling, "which is so deeply rooted in me that I obviously go way out in the meadow with it."

Once again, however, the problem had been compounded by misguided casting and direction. "Raymond Massey is a lovely old gentleman who once was a fine actor, but who is very slow, very soft, and doesn't give you any of the balls that you desperately need in this kind of a guy," Serling observed. "I venture to say that if a Rod Steiger did this, he'd blow you

apart. It's a static piece that should have been violently moving."

In addition, the actor playing the son needed more of an edge, more depth, "because in truth," Serling said, "when Raymond Massey refers to him as a creampuff, a vegetable, a cauliflower, essentially that's what we're looking at. We're looking at Jimmy Stewart dead at age sixteen. He is a vegetable."

"When the kid aims the rifle at the father, you should think for all the world that he may kill him. There's no doubt in anyone's mind who sees this that the boy won't pull the trigger."

Serling also bemoaned "the bullshit thunder coming out of the phony klieg lights" that was used and overused in an attempt to heighten dramatic tension. Calling it "unsubtle," he joked that "the reason for the thunder is that Mr. Wasserman, who owns Universal, gets thunder wholesale. There's a thunder dealer in Encino who supplies him with thunder very cheaply—how else can you explain why there's always thunder?"

But all of this was insult added to injury, since the episode was not even the story he had first written. "The presentation of the African young man was a device that they insisted on," Serling complained. "It was written originally as a short story in which there was no phony black magic."

"The kid comes back from the hunt, and he's outraged by the old man, and he goes berserk. There's a scene in the study where the kid goes after him with an axe and decapitates him, takes this bloody head, and jams it on a nail on the wall—at which point the lawyer comes in, screams bloody murder, and runs out of the house. That's decapitation, you know, unheard of in television."

January 6, 1971, was not a good day for *Night Gallery*. Matters improved somewhat, though, the following week. The January 13 episode opened with one of Serling's favorites, "Pamela's Voice." Starring John Astin (who would continue to pop up on the series as a director and actor throughout its run) and Phyllis Diller (in a perfect piece of casting), this odd little segment concerns a murderous husband doomed to listen to his shrew of a wife throughout eternity.

"It's a marvelous tour de force for a performer," Serling said, one that "gave me a chance to write for people."

It is also a script hip-deep in sarcasms written and delivered with great



Steven Spielberg

enthusiasm, comparable to the "Uncle Simon" episode of *Twilight Zone*, which centered on two utterly disagreeable people who will go on insulting one another for the duration of their natural—or unnatural—lives. There is also a kind of glee between the lines, leading to the possibility that from time to time Serling liked to cut loose and give voice to all the wonderfully sarcastic lines that would be out of place in a more serious teleplay.

Not everyone shared Serling's enthusiasm, however. The Hollywood trade paper, *Daily Variety*, described the segment as "two unpleasant people hacking away at each other for ten minutes, and it's a bore."

Giving a hint of reviews to come, the same *Daily Variety* review leveled two criticisms that would be echoed by others—often unfairly—during the series's three-year run.

"Lone Survivor," the evening's second segment, was described by the review as "Overly long and too talky." But in this story about a survivor of the *Titanic* who claims to have survived years in an open boat, and the disbelieving captain and crew of the ship that rescues him, Serling deliberately chose a matter-of-fact approach to the fantastic.

"The fantasy has to be real, and the people playing in the fantasy must react to it on either of two levels: they must be aware of it being a fantasy and react properly to the fact that they're living in a bizarre environment, or they may not be aware of it, and then just act as normal human beings. But they can't run around with a big

sign saying, 'I am now undergoing a fantasy.'"

*Daily Variety's* second major criticism concerned the very nature of the series. On the one hand, the review gave some merit points to the last segment, "The Doll," noting that it had "some genuine suspense."

On the other hand, *Daily Variety* criticized the other segments for being "more hokum than horror." And therein lies the problem. *Night Gallery* was never intended to be merely a horror series. Serling's hope was that *Night Gallery* would be "a bit more ambitious, with shows ranging from tongue-in-cheek to foot-in-grave." Many critics never quite understood this.

Just exactly what *Night Gallery* was capable of producing became abundantly clear the following week—and this time, even the critics were impressed.

On January 20, 1971, viewers saw a very short segment entitled "The Last Laurel," and a much longer one taking up most of the hour, entitled "They're Tearing Down Tim Riley's Bar."

"The Last Laurel" was adapted by Serling from the short story "The Horsehair Trunk," written in 1948 by the Southern writer Davis Grubb (*Night of the Hunter*). This tale of murder and astral projection starring Jack Cassidy is utterly run-of-the-mill, from the script to the acting. The hour was easily dominated by "They're Tearing Down Tim Riley's Bar," which dealt with a theme obviously very important to Serling—how a yearning for a happier past can keep a man from living fully in an increasingly more complicated present. It was a theme he had explored before, notably in *The Twilight Zone* episodes "Walking Distance" and "A Stop at Willoughby," but never as successfully as in "Tim Riley's Bar."

"Throughout these articles, we will present story summaries of *Night Gallery* as they were originally aired over the NBC network. However, the *Night Gallery* now in syndication is sometimes very different from those original shows. When Universal/MCA decided to syndicate the series in a half-hour format, it added extraneous material to some shorter segments to fill them out to a thirty-minute slot and edited down some of the longer segments. Because of this, the syndicated version of "They're Tearing Down Tim Riley's Bar" is about half the length of the original.

Where necessary, we will point out these differences in the hope that someday Universal will release the original versions on videocassette, just as they have of the *Night Gallery* movie.

Everyone directly involved with the segment knew that they had something special when they first read the script. Director Don Taylor said it was "the best of Serling. Jesus, that was as good as Serling ever did."

When Taylor first conferred with Laird on casting, he immediately suggested for the lead role an actor he had worked with before on the tv series *The Farmer's Daughter* and other projects—William Windom.

"When I got the script, it was a good script," Windom recalls with characteristic understatement. "When we were filming it, it's still a good script. And when we're all through filming it, I don't know where I'm going to get a better one. I've been out here all this time, and I've liked all the shows I've done, but that's the only one I ever bought a copy of—to show my kids when they get older what the old man used to be able to do."

Rounding out the other major roles in the segment were John Randolph as the boss, Bert Convy as the devious, overachieving junior executive, and Diane Baker as the sympathetic secretary, solid choices who turned in excellent performances.

Even the minor roles were cast and performed with care. Windom remembers in particular the actress who played the small but important role of Lane's long-dead love, Katy, who appears in the segment's climactic sequence.

"I remember being quite amazed, because it's a fairly unemotional business [for an actor], as far as getting into the sequences of a scene," Windom said of the scene where his character, a businessman in 1971, is suddenly thrust back in time to 1945 and his own World War II homecoming party. "I was the last one on the set for some reason I don't remember, and so they were all ready, all these people—his father, and all his friends, and his girl. None of them were actors I had ever seen before. They all had fairly small parts. But my God! That girl—and her face, and her acting—has stuck in my mind ever since. I went into that scene and did it, and I fell in love with that girl. I didn't see her afterwards. I don't even know her name. It was kind of like a dream in itself."

"I'm not a guy who is easily moved, certainly not on a tv or movie set. But that really got to me."

As important as the supporting cast was, there is no doubt that in the role of Randy Lane, William Windom

"turned in the outstanding performance of the evening, bringing to vivid and painful life all the frustrations, fears, and hopes of Serling's script. Yet if Universal could have had its way, Windom would never have been cast. 'I just slipped him in,' Taylor said, 'and nobody said anything, until finally they [the studio] saw the rushes one day, and they said, 'Holy Jesus! Why didn't somebody tell us we had a big show here? We could've gotten a star.'"

Windom, who had won an Emmy for his critically acclaimed work in the series *My World and Welcome to It*, confirms the incident. "I think they

**"He ruined the set.  
Everybody said,  
'Oh, my god,  
what are we going  
to do?'"**

wanted to use Troy Donahue or one of their standard stable people," he says, "and Taylor told them, 'If you don't use Windom, you don't use me.'" Windom stayed.

These high-level confrontations never affected the actors or crew on the set. Everyone remembers "Tim Riley's Bar" as a relatively trouble-free segment—until the day the wrecking ball was brought in.

"We built up this Irish pub," recalls art director Joe Alves, "and I came up with this beautiful sort of stained glass sign, 'Tim Riley's Bar,' and we put it out on the back lot. We also had a wrecking ball that, in the climactic scene, was going to go right into the sign. So I asked the guy operating the thing if he'd ever done this before. 'Oh, yeah, I'm an expert at it,' he says. I said great."

"Well, we're on the New York street set, he takes a swing, and he knocks out a wall across the street, and the ball recoils, comes at the sign, doesn't hit the sign, misses the entire building, and smashes a hole in another building!"

Segment director Don Taylor remembers it well. "He ruined that other set. Everybody said, 'Oh, my God, what are we going to do?' I said, 'We're going to do take two.'"

"They're Tearing Down Tim Riley's bar" received almost unanimous praise and was nominated for an Em-

my for outstanding single program.

Yet even here, *Night Gallery* was neglected in a way all of its future programs would be, regardless of merit: no one who participated in the episode was nominated. This odd inconsistency prompted Cecil Smith to complain in the *Los Angeles Times* that "you look in vain through the nominations for its author, or its director, or its stars. So what you have is a show so brilliantly done that it rates in the finals for the finest single program of the year—yet neither its writing, its direction, nor its acting were worthy of mentioning."

"They're Tearing Down Tim Riley's Bar" did not win that night, and *Night Gallery* would never again receive a major award nomination.

But a show's worth and success are not measured in Emmy nominations. What mattered was that a show had been produced, directed, and acted in the way Serling had envisioned it.

Or had it? There has been some confusion over this. Windom recalls that Serling's original script for "Tim Riley's Bar" did not contain the ending in which Randy Lane learns to live happily in the present and let go of the past.

"The ending as originally written," Windom said, "had my character standing on a slab of cement where the building used to be, looking up into the rain. End of show. No last-minute rescues in that version; Lane is left as a man who can't live in the past and is unwilling to live in the present. Serling's point is made through negative illustration."

Although director Taylor does not recall this earlier ending it does appear that the ending in which Randolph Lane is redeemed was an afterthought. But it is equally clear that Serling came to agree with this change.

In 1971 Serling published a collection of original short stories based on his *Night Gallery* scripts. Not a word went into that collection that he didn't approve. Thus, for example, the short story "Clean Kills and Other Trophies" has the decapitation ending Serling originally intended. And the story "They're Tearing Down Tim Riley's Bar" ends exactly the same way as the tv presentation, with Randy Lane's redemption.

When *Night Gallery* came to the end of its trial run, it didn't take NBC long to look at the ratings and make its decision: *Night Gallery* was picked up for the 1971-72 season as a weekly hour-long show.

# A Show-by-Show Guide to

# Rod Serling's *Night Gallery*

*Continuing our exclusive guide  
to the series that carried on the 'Twilight Zone' tradition—  
complete with Rod Serling's opening narrations.*

## MAKE ME LAUGH

Broadcast: January 6, 1971.

Teleplay by Rod Serling

Directed by Steven Spielberg

Jackie Slater (Godfrey Cambridge), Jules Kettleman (Tom Bosley), Chatterje (Jackie Vernon), Myron Mishkin (Al Lewis), David Garrick (Sidney Clute), Heckler (John J. Fox), Second Bartender (Gene Kearney), First Bartender (Sonny Klein), Director (Tony Rubbel), Miss Wilson (Michael Hart), Flower Lady (Georgia Schmidt), First Laughor (Sid Rushakoff), Second Laughor (Don Melvoin).

*On display this evening, a pastiche of painting from oddball land. The poet Sir Max Beerbohm reflected that no one ever died of laughter. Object of brush and palette: the rebuttal. The clown is Jackie Slater. His occupation, a comedian. His aspiration, to collect funny bones and hang them on the walls of his life to hide the cracked plaster and yellowed wallpaper that is part of the interior decoration of failure. Poor Jackie Slater—a bad joke told in a foreign language in an empty hall; the comic unable to coax laughter. The painting is called "Make Me Laugh." And this lightless limbo is called The Night Gallery.*

From a fat boy who was laughed at by his peers to a down-and-out comic in a sleazy nightclub, Jackie Slater keeps trying, pumping out the

shtick. Only the punch lines are as tired as Jackie's eyes, and nobody's laughing anymore.

Then, on the day nightclub owner Mr. Mishkin fires him and his agent, Jules, departs for Pittsburgh with a steel-guitar band, Jackie meets Chatterje, a soft-spoken, turbaned guru—a troubled worker of questionable miracles. If Chatterje does not perform a miracle before midnight, he will lose his powers and dishonor his ancestors.

A miracle is exactly what Jackie's been looking for. Despite Chatterje's warning that his miracles have certain imperfections, Jackie requests his miracle: he wants to make people laugh. Somewhat reluctantly, Chatterje complies. With a look, the miracle is done. Instantly, Jackie Slater is the funniest man on earth. Even his most innocuous remarks provoke hysterical laughter.

Soon Jackie Slater a star: in nightclubs, on television, in Las Vegas. But when Jules tracks him down, hoping to latch onto a star, he finds that Jackie isn't happy. Jackie is bored. The jokes are old, sometimes not even jokes at all—and yet, the comic complains, audiences laugh. The challenge is gone. He needs a new challenge, and acting might be just the thing. A director has offered him a straight part in a dramatic play, and he's accepted.

But during the first day of rehearsals, Jackie discovers to his horror that lines designed to elicit tears reap peals of laughter when he says them. He rushes from the theater—and into an-



Godfrey Cambridge

other meeting with Chatterje. He pleads with the guru to reverse the miracle. He doesn't want to make people laugh anymore—he wants to make them cry. Once again, reluctantly, Chatterje complies.

Spotting a flower lady at her stand, Jackie starts across the street hoping to test the new miracle on her—will she laugh or cry? Intent on this, Jackie has forgotten Chatterje's warnings about his miracles' imperfections, and does not notice the car until it hits him. The curtain drops on Jackie Slater.

And as the flower lady cries for the dead comic, Chatterje goes on his way, wondering if he'll ever get the hang of this.

## CLEAN KILLS AND OTHER TROPHIES

Broadcast January 6, 1971  
Written by Rod Serling  
Directed by Walter Doniger

Colonel Archie Dittman, Sr. (Raymond Massey), Mr. Pierce (Tom Troupe), Archie Dittman, Jr. (Barry Brown), Tom (Herbert Jefferson, Jr.)

*Our second painting this evening has to do with the stalker and the victim—the hunter and the hunted—that rare breed of Homo sapien whose love of butchery is not a sport but a consuming passion. Offered to you now, "Clean Kills and Other Trophies."*

Archie had never measured up to the violent standards of his father, Colonel Dittman, a hunter dedicated to the proposition that self-worth is measured by the crosshairs of a rifle scope. Only his friendship with the Colonel's butler, Tom, had made the years bearable. Tom, a well-educated African native, has himself endured years of Colonel Dittman's patronizing remarks about his "pagan beliefs" and devotion to ancestral African gods. Only his devotion to Archie has kept him there.

On this night, Archie and Mr. Pierce, a family attorney, are gathered in Dittman's elaborate trophy room. Under the watchful gaze of mounted wild animal heads, Mr. Pierce asks the Colonel to sign the papers that will release a trust fund worth millions of dollars to Archie, who is now of legal age.

Raymond Massey



But Colonel Dittman refuses to turn over this legacy to a "dish of jelly consommé." Unless Archie goes on a hunt with him tomorrow, and for the first time in his life kills an animal, Dittman vows to squander Archie's total investment on high-risk ventures, leaving Archie with nothing.

Contemptuously Dittman loads a rifle and throws it to Archie, daring his son to fight back. He taunts his son until, driven into a rage, Archie takes aim at his father. Dittman is supremely unconcerned. But Archie seems determined to shoot—until Tom knocks the gun away. Shaken by the violence he has almost committed, Archie agrees to the hunt. "Better a deer than a patricide," he says, then goes wearily upstairs to sleep.

And Tom retires to the trophy room, where he spends the night before a raging fire in the hearth, praying to his African gods.

In the morning, the hunt begins. Spotting a deer, Archie raises the gun, hesitates. His uncle strikes him, the blow causes the gun to go off, and the bullets strike—but it is a lung shot, not a clean kill. The deer runs away, slowly bleeding to death. The hunters must track it for hours.

When at last they return to the estate with the deer, Dittman is still furious with his son, refusing to credit Archie for at least trying. As for Archie, he is distraught at having killed a living thing.

Dittman goes into his trophy room, where he finds Tom. The room suddenly seems to grow hot, his head hurts, something is happening...

Tom emerges and tells Mr. Pierce to take the boy and go. Colonel Dittman has been punished—fittingly, properly, as ugly as the crime. This was what he had prayed to his gods for. Mr. Pierce looks into the room, pales at what he sees—and then quickly goes to find Archie. Alone now, Tom reenters the trophy room, shuts the door, and raises a glass of wine in a toast to Colonel Dittman, hunter, whose head now hangs mounted on the trophy room wall.

## PAMELA'S VOICE

Broadcast January 13, 1971  
Teleplay by Rod Serling  
Directed by Richard Benedict

Pamela (Phyllis Diller), Jonathan (John Astin)



Phyllis Diller

*Welcome, art lovers. We offer for your approval a still life, if you will, of noise. A soundless canvas suggestive of sound. The mouth belongs to Pamela. In life, a shrieking battle-axe made up of adenoids, tonsils, and sound decibels. In death, an unmuted practitioner of fishwifery, undeterred and ungagged by what one would assume to be the great silence. Some ghosts come back to haunt, others come back simply to pick up where they left off. Our painting is called "Pamela's Voice." And this is The Night Gallery.*

Jonathan enters the room where the coffin has been set up for display, closes the door, and smiles. Pamela is dead. Pamela's voice—a voice like "unloiled roller skates," like "fingernails screeching on a blackboard"—is silent at last.

Suddenly, the organ plays itself, the fire roars high in the fireplace, and Pamela appears before him. He is not entirely surprised. She went everywhere in life uninvited—to gossip, to inflict pain, to destroy reputations. He wonders if her death hurt—even a little. It didn't. He's disappointed, but

can live with it. After all, he's there, and she's in heaven, or hell, or—

Wrong, she tells him. She's right here. But he's unworried. Whatever she might say, he's rid of her and her voice. That was why he did it. Fed up with her voice, he had pushed her down the long, winding staircase—and he's glad. This manifestation, which he attributes to the Dickensian bit of undigested cheese, will pass as soon as the coffin is taken away for burial.

Pamela simply cannot believe how absent-minded he is. They buried her months ago. Suddenly worried, Jonathan goes to the coffin and looks inside. He is the deceased occupant, the victim of excessive celebration following her demise. He never did listen to her about his drinking, and now he, too, is a ghost. He struggles for intellectual balance. If he's dead, then he should go up ... or down.

It isn't that simple, she explains. In heaven you do what you want. In her case, she likes to communicate. Therefore, she will spend eternity talking. But the organization with which he is now affiliated is not so accommodating. Therefore, he shall spend eternity listening. To her.

And backtracking to the moment of her death, Pamela picks up her nagging like a lost stitch and continues. And continues ...

## LONE SURVIVOR

Broadcast January 13, 1971

Written by Rod Serling

Directed by Gene Levitt

Survivor (John Cilicos), First Captain (Torin Thatcher), Ship's Doctor (Hedley Mattingly), First Officer of the Watch (Charles Davis), First Quartermaster (Brendan Dillon), Mr. Richards (William Beckley), Helmsman (Terence Pushman), Second Captain (Edward Colmans), Second Officer of the Watch (Pierre Jalbert), Second Quartermaster (Carl Millette)

An unforgiving sea usually buries its secrets beneath itself. Warships and ocean liners, treasure galleons and submarines turn into rusting relics inside a watery locker, lost to memory. But occasionally there comes a floating, unbidden reminder of disaster—like this lifeboat. The painting is called "The Lone Survivor." We'll put it in a row and see where she came from—and why.



Torin Thatcher

A steamer making a cross-Atlantic run comes across a lifeboat, its sole occupant apparently a woman. Yet there have been no reports of a ship going down in the area. The puzzle is deepened by the name visible on the lifeboat's bow: *Titanic*. Plucking the lifeboat from the sea's grasp, they find not a woman but a man, unconscious, disguised in women's clothing. There are no supplies, only one blanket, and the lifeboat is heavily barnacled, as if it had been afloat since the *Titanic* was hit—three years before.

After being treated for frostbite—in May—the survivor slowly recovers. He does not remember his name, only that he had been aboard the *Titanic* when it hit the iceberg. But this is 1915, not 1912. How could he have survived in a lifeboat for three years?

Answer: He couldn't. Thus, the captain concludes, the "survivor" is a German spy put in their path to slow them down. After all, there is a war on—and this is the *Lusitania*.

The survivor continues to recover, though when given food he seems curiously unable to eat. Agitated, he tells his story to the doctor: He had been a sailor on the *Titanic*, and had escaped by dressing as a woman, pushing others aside. Now he realizes that he is being punished—he is a Flying Dutchman of flesh and blood, damned to an eternity of lifeboats and rescues by doomed ships. And the *Lusitania* is

doomed—it will be hit by a torpedo and go down in eighteen minutes.

The captain scoffs when the doctor relays this warning. Why should they suffer for his sins? But, the doctor says, the survivor is convinced only he himself will suffer—because the ship and its crew are only phantoms, present to people the set. The captain laughs. He doesn't feel like a phantom, he tells the doctor—but the doctor has vanished. The captain calls frantically to the bridge, but no one answers, no one is there. Then he, too, is gone.

And the survivor goes to the deck, sees the submarine, shouts warnings that no one can hear. Only he feels the terror as the torpedo is launched, the hull heaves up with an explosion, the bow tips ...

Then: another ship, another officer of the watch who spots a lifeboat up ahead, on its bow the name *Lusitania*. The captain shakes his head. It must be someone's sick idea of a joke. After all, this is forty years later; and the ship is the *Andrea Doria*.

## THE DOLL

Broadcast January 13, 1971

Teleplay by Rod Serling, based on a short story by Algernon Blackwood  
Directed by Rudi Dorn

Jewel Blanch





Henry Silva

Miss Danton (Shani Wallis), Colonel Masters (John Williams), Pandit Chola (Henry Silva), Monica (Jewel Blanch), Indian (Than Wyenn), Butler (John Barclay)

*We call your attention now to a small fragment of history. This little collector's item here dates back a few hundred years, to the British-Indian colonial period, proving only that sometimes the least likely objects can be filled with the most likely horror. Our painting is called "The Doll." And this one you'd best not play with.*

It is 1907, and Britain clings fiercely to its colony in India, achieving with gun and bayonet what diplomacy could not obtain. For twenty-one years, Colonel Masters dealt with the problems of British rule in that subcontinent. Now retired in England, his problem is more immediate. He has been entrusted with the care of his orphaned niece, Monica, but due to his limited pension, she must live at his estate, far from friends and with few playthings.

Miss Danton, Monica's governess, thinks this may be why the girl has become obsessed with the doll Col. Masters sent her—a strange, ugly doll with dark eyes and tiny, white teeth.

But the Colonel explains that he did not send the doll. It had been intended for him, and must be gotten rid of somehow—but they must not speak of their intentions in the doll's presence.

Nine p.m.: Monica insists to her uncle that a new doll, just bought in London, must be returned. The other doll hates it. She insists that the doll speaks to her, tells her all kinds of things—and it must be very fond of him, she says, because it's always mentioning his name. But Monica is also fond of her uncle and doesn't want to hurt his feelings. She says she'll see what she can do about the doll.

Eleven o'clock: Monica's new doll has been torn to shreds. The old doll was jealous, Monica says in tears. The dark-eyed doll seems to stare at the colonel.

Midnight, and a dozing Col. Masters looks up to find an intruder: Pandit Chola, an Indian resistor whose brother was executed at Masters's order. He sent the doll, which cannot be destroyed or lost until it achieves its mission. Masters, who has seen too much not to believe in magic, is not surprised. Of the doll's mission, Chola points out that the doll has teeth. Its bite is poisonous—and no medicine can save one bitten. With that, he returns to the night.

Upstairs, Miss Danton comforts a distraught Monica. The doll is gone. It walked out. Downstairs, Masters seizes the fireplace poker. He will see how indestructible this spawn of hell is. At top of the stairs, the doll waits for him. There's a cry. Miss Danton rushes out to find the Colonel bleeding from a deep gash in his right arm.

Its mission done, the doll can now be destroyed, and the colonel throws it to the fire. But he is dying. With his last strength he tells Miss Danton of a sealed, addressed envelope in his room. She must deliver it immediately, saying, "The thing has happened." And then he asks her to use his insurance money to take Monica far away, to a place where she can play with other children, and to buy her things—a new doll, to start with.

Elsewhere, Pandit Chola packs for a hasty exit as an Indian arrives bearing a long box—a gift from Colonel Masters. Fear and realization coming into his eyes, he opens the box, and finds inside a doll of Colonel Masters, a whiskered doll that smiles at him, baring two perfect rows of tiny white teeth.

## THEY'RE TEARING DOWN TIM RILEY'S BAR

Broadcast January 20, 1971

Teleplay by Rod Serling

Directed by Don Taylor

Randy Lane (William Windom), Lynn Alcott (Diane Baker), Pritkin (John Randolph), Doane (Bert Convy), Officer McDermott (Henry Beckman), Blodgett (David Astor), Tim Riley (Robert Herrman), Bartender (Gene O'Donnell), Father (Frederic Downs), First Policeman (John Ragin), Intern (David Frank), Katy (Susannah Darrow), Miss Trevor (Mary Gail Hobbs), Switchboard Operator (Margie Hall), First Workman (Don Melvoin), Second Workman (Matt Pelto)

*Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to an exhibit of the eerie and the oddball. Our first offering this evening: faces. Paint, pigment, and desperation—the quiet desperation of men over forty who keep hearing footsteps behind them and are torn between a fear and a compulsion to look over their shoulders. The painting is called "They're Tearing Down Tim Riley's Bar."*

It's three o'clock and Randolph Lane, sales director for Pritkin's Plastic

William Windom



Products, has not returned from lunch. Assistant sales director Doane uses this to score points with the boss. But Lane's worried secretary, Lynn Alcott, tries to placate Mr. Pritkin, reminding him of what everyone seems to have forgotten—that this is Lane's twenty-fifth anniversary with the company.

At last Lane returns, a little drunk. He's been outside the condemned building that was once Tim Riley's Bar, drinking to the anniversary of his return from World War II, to his homecoming there twenty-five years ago, his memory of his friends and, most of all, his wife, Katy. They're tearing down a part of his past, and it hurts. The present is not very happy for Lane. A widower for eighteen years, he feels alone and unappreciated. And now Mr. Pritkin chooses this day to tell Lane that his unscrupulous assistant Doane will henceforth be codirector of sales and his equal on the job.

Oblivious to—or afraid of—Lynn's love for him and her desire to help, Randy returns alone to Tim Riley's Bar. From inside the supposedly deserted building he hears "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow." Lane peers in and sees people from his past waving to him; it's his homecoming party from World War II. He tries to force his way inside, but the vision fades away.

The next day at work, Lane's secretary is reassigned to Doane against her wishes. Outside Lane's office, the other secretaries sing "For She's a Jolly Good Fellow" to Doane's departing secretary. Lane steps to the door—and it's 1945, his first day at Pritkin Plastic Products, and his wife, Katy, is on the phone. Frantic with joy, he races to take it—but it's 1970 again.

It's too much for Lane. He returns to Tim Riley's Bar to get drunk and wait for his ghosts to return. Two policemen appear instead, and Lane is saved from arrest only by the arrival of Officer McDermott, an old friend. Lane convinces his friend to drive him to the house he and Katy had lived in. Left alone there, Lane thinks he hears Katy calling to him. But it is Lynn, who in her concern has followed him.

She offers to drive him home. But then it starts to rain, just as it did the night his wife was rushed to the hospital, dying. He races into the house—and finds himself instead in a hospital corridor. A doctor tells him he is too late, his wife is dead.

Next morning, Doane cheerily announces to Pritkin that Lane has spent the night in the drunk tank. Furious,

Lynn at last tells Doane off—and he fires her. When Lane arrives, Pritkin informs him that he, too, is fired. Lynn offers to go with him, but Lane says that's impossible. Where he's going, they probably won't let her in.

With nothing left to lose, Lynn angrily confronts Pritkin. After twenty-five years of loyal service, Randy Lane deserved better, she says, at the very least a kind word of appreciation. That much Pritkin owed him.

At Tim Riley's Bar, Randy Lane finds his memories. It's 1945, and his father, friends, Tim Riley himself, and his wife-to-be Katy are there to greet him. But as Lane tries to reach out to them, they freeze—they hear the sound of the wrecking crew destroying the building. Ignore it, Randy pleads. But the ghosts know Randy Lane does not belong there. In a sad voice, Katy sings "Auld Lang Syne," and the past fades away.

Disheartened, abandoned even by his personal ghosts, Lane wanders into another bar, from which the strains of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" can be heard. There he finds Mr. Pritkin, Lynn, and everyone from the office, all gathered to congratulate him on twenty-five years of hard work. As Lynn takes his arm and the wrecking ball outside drives home the final blows to Tim Riley's Bar, Mr. Pritkin holds out an apology and the hope that the second twenty-five years will be even better than the first.

## THE LAST LAUREL

Broadcast January 20, 1971

Teletype by Rod Serling, based on

"The Horsehair Trunk," by

Davis Grubb

Directed by Daryl Duke

Marius Davis (Jack Cassidy), Susan Davis (Martine Beswick), Dr. Armstrong (Martin E. Brooks)

*We offer for your approval a painting which has to do with what happens to men who take a walk into nature's marketplace, and exchange certain powers for other powers. The blind, we're told, for example, develop an extraordinary sense of touch. In this case, the story of a man who perfects the art of killing. Our painting is called "The Last Laurel."*

On a lightning-wracked night, Marius Davis, decathlon champion



Jack Cassidy

crippled in a car accident and reduced to immobility and self-pity, lies in bed surrounded by his trophies. He has sent for Doctor Armstrong, who has come forty miles in terrible weather and won't be able to leave until morning. Which should not be too great a burden, Marius says, since the good doctor is having an affair with his wife. Armstrong denies this, tries to calm Marius. But Marius's mind, once set, cannot be deflected from its chosen course—especially when revenge is the final destination.

Marius has trained his mind to the techniques of soul projection. He can leave his body, can manipulate physical objects with ease. His plan: to lure the doctor into staying the night, pick up a pair of Susan's sewing shears, and stick them into Armstrong's jugular. He will take his revenge, and the only logical suspect will be Susan.

So he leaves his body that night, and all goes as planned—until a flash of lightning knocks out all the power. Finding a huge candlestick, he makes his way through the darkness to the room, finds the bed, brings back the candlestick, and smashes it into the occupant's head. But in backing out, he knocks something over. A trophy. To his horror, he realizes that in the darkness he's come into the wrong room; the dead body on the bed, head smashed, is his own. He screams. Susan and the doctor come running, knocking on the locked door, asking if Marius is all right.

But Marius Davis doesn't live here anymore. 17

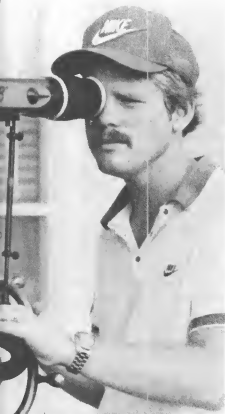


1. Actors Steve Guttenberg and Don Ameche, on location in Florida. 2. Aliens-in-disguise Tyrone Power, Jr., Mike Nomad, and Brian Dennehy open a cocoon. 3. Artist Ralph McQuarrie's conception of an Antarean spaceship approaching the Florida coast. 4. The human "husk" shed by a being from Antares.



*Aliens take over St. Petersburg in a new fantasy from the man who brought you 'Splash.'*

by PAUL M. SAMMON



Director Ron Howard

Maureen Stapleton, an Academy Award winner for her role in Warren Beatty's *Reds*, isn't happy. But she's being—well, nice about it. "We've been here a couple of months now," she says, gesturing vaguely toward the pool of the St. Petersburg Hilton and, by implication, the finely grained beach fronting the warm Atlantic beyond. "And all the people have been marvelous," Stapleton sighs, shifts in her beach chair, and squints at the sun. "On the other hand, when you're on location this long, things tend to get a bit ... dull."

Dull indeed. Anyone who's been forced down in St. Petersburg for a few days (discounting the locals and the ever-growing number of ex-New Yorkers fleeing that beleaguered metropolis) gets a quick lesson in why the city is one of Florida's most popular retirement communities. There's the sun, of course, the sea, and the river-threaded salt marshes dotted with flat timberland all around you. But other than a small downtown area filled with shopping malls and theaters that could be from Anytown, U.S.A., that's about it for St. Pete. It's quiet here, folks, and we like it that

way, thank you very much.

All by way of preamble to point out that the cast and crew of *Cocoon*—actor/director Ron Howard's follow-up to last year's popular *Splash*—couldn't be in a better spot. *Cocoon* deals with getting too old, getting too comfortable, getting, in other words, too dead while you're still on your feet. The fact that the film centers on a group of retirement home citizens slowly fading out of life, only to be shaken out of that deadly complacency by a group of benign aliens masquerading as humans, seems a perfect parallel to the situation faced by the St. Petersburg residents as Hollywood descended on their sleepy little town.

A 20th Century-Fox release due out this summer, *Cocoon* has a screenplay by Tom Benedek based on a novel by David Saperstein. Producers Richard D. Zanuck, his wife Lili Fini Zanuck, and David Brown plunked their crew on location August 20, 1984; after ten weeks the unit moved on to the Bahamas for a couple of weeks' additional filming, mostly underwater. These aliens, you see, also charter boats and scuba dive, all in the effort to retrieve and safeguard some large, rather mysterious aquatic pods left by the creatures when they were here on Earth 2500 years ago. There's also a retirement home in *Cocoon*, one right next to a mysterious swimming pool which is really the Fountain of Youth ... But never mind, see the film yourself. It will also feature some special effects sequences courtesy of George Lucas's Industrial Light and Magic (under the supervision of Ken Ralston) and complex makeup by Greg Cannom, whose work has also been on display in *The Howling* and *Greystoke*.

Other than the presence of Ron Howard (who went from playing small-screen characters like Andy Griffith's son Opie and *Happy Days*' Richie Cunningham to become the surprisingly good big-screen director of *Night Shift* and *Splash*, *Cocoon*'s main points of interest are its story and cast. And what a cast it is, a true one-of-a-kind ensemble. Sandwiched between such newcomers as Steve Guttenberg (*Police Academy*), Tahnee Welch (Raquel's daughter), Tyrone Power (son of the late actor), and Brian Dennehy (*First Blood*'s pursuing sheriff) are a veritable Who's Who of

early-generation stage and screen stars: Don Ameche, Gwen Verdon, Jack Gilford, Hume Cronyn, Jessica Tandy, Wilford Brimley, and, yes, Maureen Stapleton.

*Cocoon*'s story line should warm the hearts of *Twilight Zone* fans, for the fossilized residents of *Cocoon*'s retirement home—golden agers who suddenly gain new youth through the intervention of rather unearthly newcomers—will stir pleasant memories of George Clayton Johnson's "Kick the Can," the classic tv episode which was remade as the Steven Spielberg-directed segment of *Twilight Zone: The Movie*. Not that we're talking imitation here—*Cocoon*'s story line is much too inventive for that; besides, this youth-age theme is only one of its threads. But the idea that you're only as old as you feel is still a damn good one. Ask Don Ameche.

"*Cocoon* is a movie that says you must never stop being young. I play a very average man named Art Selwyn who has never married, did his time in the Navy, and made his living as a salesman before he retired. But after my dip in the pool, I really kick up my heels; I even get to do a little break dancing in a disco."

Someone who has founded a career on dancing is Gwen Verdon, the Broadway musical actress with four Tony awards to her credit. Cinematically, Verdon is best remembered for her show-stopping performance as Lola in the 1958 *Damn Yankees* (another fantasy involving the Devil, this time with major-league baseball thrown in) and as Richard Gere's mother in the 1984 gangster musical *The Cotton Club*. Like Ameche, Verdon also had a touch of fantasy in her past—this time in the real world. "When I was a kid, Orson Welles did *War of the Worlds* on the radio, and after it was over, my family rushed me down to the local station and locked me in a cell to protect me from the Martians. And I've been waiting for them ever since!

"I play an ex-showgirl in *Cocoon* who organizes the senior citizens home and sort of does this running aerobic dance class for the place, out of sheer boredom. My character is someone who refuses to grow old, although at first she wears an enormous amount of makeup—a huge Lucille Ball-type lipsticked mouth and

(continued on page 89)

## MOTHER'S DAY

(continued from page 63)


Donald returned to the side of the bed and kissed her cheek. "I was glad to do it, Mother. Now, you get some rest. I'll just put the dishes in the sink and let myself out the back."

"You're really a good son, Donny," she sighed. "Your father would be proud."

Proud? Donald thought as he carried the tray into the kitchen and stacked the dirty cups in the sink. When had Father ever been proud of me, Mother? When was he even satisfied? Eat all your vegetables, Donnie, so you can grow up to be a big strong cop like me. Go out for the football team, son, it'll make a man out of you. Do what I say, be what I am, like what I like. My house, my rules. Get a haircut. Throw away those dirty jeans. Turn down that rotten music. Forget college. Learn to be a man. Caress that rifle, Donnie, and shoot to kill.

It was November again and he was in the clearing. The cold air, the light snowfall, the copse of birch trees ahead. There was the movement in the brush and, as he raised his gun and caressed it with his shoulder, a glimpse of red and black. Then the second movement in the trees. He could see the target clearly now. He hesitated a lifetime as Father turned toward him and raised his arms, anger and fear distorting Big Bill's face. Donald smiled, satisfied, and pulled the trigger.

"It wasn't my fault," he whispered, bending down to pick up the tool box. "It was fate, pure and simple. Father was meant to die, at that chosen time, in that chosen place. It was just his day." Then, just before going out the back door to his waiting car and his waiting home and family, Donald reached over to the old forty-inch range and turned on the gas for the left front burner.

"And today," he smiled, as he went out the door, "is Mother's day." 

## the Bookshop

(continued from page 59)

A swift decision stirred him. With a sudden cry he stepped back from the ancient's proffered clasp, whirled and stumbled toward the doorway. The worn knob slipped beneath his palm; the door held, and in panic desperation he tugged, panting, at the barrier. Behind him the soft choices rose in a wailing crescendo of dismay. A sigh whispered in his ear, "There's no escape, my son. You but delay—"

Then the door was open; and the sunlight, raw, hot, and heavy as the crush of a monstrous fist, was blinding-gold in his eyes. With the precious volume clenched in his hands, he cried aloud his triumph, staggered into the street wildly, heedlessly.

He did not hear the voices raised in swift warning, nor the startled rasp of the klaxon, nor the screaming grind of futile brakes. He heard only the deafening tumult of a world flaming into oblivion ... then the soft peace once more, and the chiding voice of ancient one. "You but delay, my son. Are you ready, now?"

And a cool hand meeting his own ...

"Couldn't help hittin' him!"

said the truckman. "I swear to God I couldn't help it! This guy seen it—he'll tell you. He came bustin' right out in front o' me, shoutin' like he was crazy or something. I tried to stop, but—"


"Okay," said the big man in blue. "Okay. It wasn't your fault. Anybody else see it happen? Where'd he come from, anyhow?"

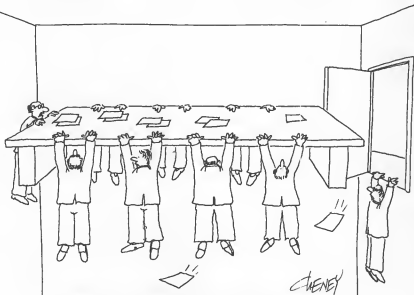
A witness, white of lip, lifted horror-fascinated eyes from the figure on the asphalt. He pointed a shaking finger.

"Over there, officer. That vacant lot across the street. I saw him wandering around in there, mumbling to himself. I think he must have had a sunstroke the way he acted. That property has been vacant for years. Why he'd want to go in there?"

"I'll take your name," said the policeman. "Anybody recognize him? Let's see that book he was carrying. Maybe it's got his name in it."

Someone handed him the book. He leafed through the volume briefly, tilted back his cap, and scratched his forehead.

"Hey, now! This is the queerest looking damn book I ever saw! Look! Only the first three chapters printed ... and the rest of it nothing but blank pages!" 



"The purpose of today's meeting, gentlemen, is to determine the whereabouts of our floor."

# MAD MAX

(continued from page 55)

seventy-pound metal mesh costume, but she would sit there, calm and cool, preparing for her next scene.

**TZ:** Max's battle in the Thunderdome seems very reminiscent of what they call a "steel cage match" in American professional wrestling.

**Miller:** I wasn't aware of that. For Bartertown, Thunderdome is a combination of Saturday night, the Super-bowl, television, and a Sunday church meeting. That's reflected by the music; Maurice Jarre has delivered a score for that part of the film which is at once evocative of military, circus, and religious themes.

**TZ:** Your crew this time includes Ed Verreaux, Steven Spielberg's concept and storyboard artist, whom you met on *Twilight Zone*. Can you compare his contributions to the two films?

**Miller:** On *Twilight Zone*, Ed came in and said, "I can work one of three ways: you can do your sketches and I'll render them; you can give me some general directions and I'll go away and draw up all the shots; or we can sit down and work it out shot for shot."

At that time, I already had some rough storyboard sketches which I gave to him to render. Later, in working with his storyboards, I realized what a valuable collaborator he was. On this film, we worked it out together, shot-for-shot. In effect, he directed the entire film on paper. And by working with Graham Walker, our production designer, and the costume designer, Norma Moriceau, getting their input into the storyboards, Ed was able to make a lot of the ideas concrete before we went in to shoot.

**TZ:** The end of *Road Warrior* left Max standing by the roadside, while the end of this one sounds more conclusive. If this film is well-received, will we be seeing more of Max?

**Miller:** The first one was such a tough film to make, and took so much out of me, that I remember saying at the time, "Never again." But then we did do *Road Warrior*, and that was a tough but a very happy shoot, which made it much easier to go into this one.

Not in story, but in the sense of the development of Max's character, the three films form a trilogy. From that, I have a sense of completeness. But what's really important is whether there is another story for that character. If the story comes up that is strong enough for us to do, my desire to continue or not continue is not in itself

what matters. Making a film requires such an expenditure of time and effort, and I don't see how it could be any other way—except perhaps for those people who are willing to phone in their work.

**TZ:** In the *Thunderdome*, the character of Max seems to be more forthrightly heroic, less self-interested, than he's been in the previous films.

**Miller:** He does follow the hero pattern a bit more closely, particularly in contrast to the world of Bartertown. Bartertown is not so much evil as it is profane; in a way it's the negative side of modern urban civilization, where people trade and deal in a worldly manner, leaving little room for spiritual or emotional values. When Max is banished from that world, he's then thrust into a world that's the complete opposite, the world of the lost children, who only have their mythology and their faith to hold things together. And this is what draws that heroic side out of him. He is reluctant, but because of who he is, he has no choice, really. **17**

# COCOON

(continued from page 87)

pagodalike Ginger Rogers eyebrows. But when I'm rejuvenated, I look a lot less old.

"Don Ameche and I get married in this movie," Verdon continues.

"There's a funny teenage love scene between Don and me where he's chasing me through the palm trees, and every time he catches me, I let him kiss me. And I let him catch me a lot."

But what of *Cocoon's* underlying theme, that gentle message that Howard and company are working so hard to put on film, a subtext that even the *emui* of St. Petersburg can't suffocate? "One good thing about *Cocoon* is that it may show teenagers that we older people have the same feelings as they do," concluded Verdon. "I think that's a good message. And maybe this movie will make retired people—the ones that sit and watch tv all day long—get up out of their chairs and do something!"

Rod Serling couldn't have said it better himself. **17**

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**THE COWS  
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 BY JIM RYAN



AND IN THAT TIME THERE DWELT ON THE HIGHLANDS  
 OF THE LAND TWO MIGHTY EMPIRES...

...AND THERE WAS MUCH CHOMPING  
 AND NOISHING OF BEEF...



LIKE A PLAGUE UPON THE LAND DID  
 THEIR TRIBE INCREASE.



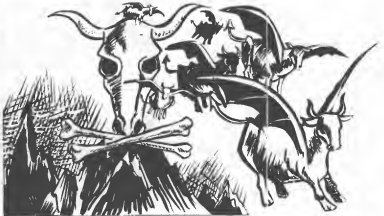
...SO, TOO, THEIR ADVERTISING BUDGETS...



YEA, THO' IN THOSE LAST DAYS I DID WARN THEM...



THEIR JUDGMENT WAS ALREADY AT HAND.



STILL, THE BURGER-MONGERS PLED THEIR TRADE...



...WHILE ABOVE, WINGED DEATH WAS ON THE HOOF, COILED TO STRIKE!



# The Mighty Casey

by ROD SERLING

*The original  
television script  
first aired on CBS-TV  
June 17, 1960*



## CAST

Mouth McGarry.....Jack Warden  
Casey.....Robert Sorrells  
Dr. Stillman.....Abraham Sofaer  
Monk.....Don O'Kelly  
Doctor.....Jonathan Hole  
Beasley.....Alan Dexter  
Commissioner.....Rusty Lane

## ACT ONE

### FADE IN:

#### 1. EXT. SKY NIGHT

Shot of the sky ... the various nebulae and planet bodies stand out in sharp, sparkling relief. As the camera begins a slow pan across the heavens—

#### NARRATOR'S VOICE

There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow—between science and superstition. And it lies between the pit of man's fears and the summit of his knowledge. This is the dimension of imagination. It is an area which we call the Twilight Zone.

The camera has begun to pan down until it passes the horizon and is flush on the opening shot (each week the opening shot of the play).

#### 2. EXT. EMPTY BALL PARK DAY

LONG ANGLE SHOT OF THE  
VAST UNPOPULATED DIAMOND  
Pan shot around the empty bleachers and

the grandstand, winding up on a shot of home plate looking toward the pitcher's mound.

#### NARRATOR'S VOICE

What you're looking at is a ghost of a baseball stadium that once housed a major league team known as the Hoboken Zephyrs. It now houses nothing but memories, and no sound except the wind that stirs in the high grass of what was an outfield, a wind that sometimes bears a faint resemblance to the roar of the crowd that once sat here.

At this point the wind seems to fuse with the filtered sound of a roaring crowd, then takes on only the sound of the crowd, which is somehow distant and haunting. At the end of narration the crowd's roar suddenly whines to a dissonant stop, like a record running down. We

DISSOLVE TO:

#### 3. MED. CLOSE SHOT SIGN

Reading: HOBOKEN ZEPHYRS TRYOUTS TODAY.

#### NARRATOR'S VOICE

We're back in time now when the Hoboken Zephyrs were still a part of the National League and this mausoleum of memories was an honest-to-Pete stadium. But, since this is strictly a story of make believe, it must start this way: once upon a time in Hoboken, New Jersey, a most unusual event happened on the way over to the ballpark. He was a left hander named Casey.

DISSOLVE TO:

#### 4. EXT. A BASEBALL FIELD DUGOUT DAY MED. CLOSE SHOT MOUTH MCGARRY

The Hoboken Zephyrs' manager. He stands on the edge of a dugout, one foot up on the parapet staring dismally out toward the field. A few feet beyond him we see a sign which reads, HOBOKEN ZEPHYRS TRYOUTS TODAY.

#### 5. PAN SHOT OVER TO BERTRAM BEASLEY

The general manager of the team, who has an expression much like Mouth's. It's as if he wears his ulcer on his face, a perpetually dour, miserably sad expression, more miserable each time he looks out toward the field.

#### 6. SERIES OF SHOTS

Of inept rookies out of step in calisthenics; one winging wildly to miss a gopher ball at the plate, yet another letting a slow grounder go between his legs.

#### 7. TWO SHOT MOUTH AND BEASLEY

As Beasley comes over to stand alongside him.

MOUTH

(turns to Beasley)

Grand looking boys!

BEASLEY

Who were you expecting—the All Stars? You stick up a tryout sign for a

# The Mighty Casey

last-division club that happens to be thirty-one games out of first—

(he points to the group doing calisthenics)

This is the material you usually round up.

**MOUTH**

This is the material you usually round up. You're the general manager of the club! Why don't you give me some ballplayers?

**BEASLEY**

You'd know what to do with them? Twenty games out of fourth place and the only big average we've got is a manager with the widest mouth in either league. Maybe you better get reminded that when the Hoboken Zephyrs win one game we gotta call it a streak! Buddy boy, when contract time comes around, you don't have to. He turns and looks toward the field.

**CUT TO:**

## 8. DIFFERENT ANGLE BEASLEY AND MOUTH

**BEASLEY**

How's Fletcher doing?

**MOUTH**

Are you kidding? Last week he pitched four innings and allowed only six runs. That makes him our most valuable player for the month.

## 9. CLOSE SHOT DUGOUT PHONE

As it rings, Beasley goes over to it, picks it up.

**BEASLEY**

Dugout.

(a pause)

What? Who?

(he cups his hand over the receiver)

You want to look at a pitcher?

## 10. CLOSE SHOT MOUTH MOUTH

Are you kidding?

## 11. MED. CLOSE SHOT BEASLEY

On phone.

**BEASLEY**

Send him down.

## 12. TRACK SHOT WITH HIM

As he walks back over to Mouth.

**BEASLEY**

He's a lefty.

**MOUTH**

Lefty, schmeffy. If he's got more than one arm, and less than four—he's for us!

(then he cups his mouth calling out to the field)

Hey, Monk!

## 13. MED. CLOSE SHOT CATCHER

Who rises from his squat, takes off his mask.

**MONK**

Yeah?

## 14. MED. CLOSE SHOT MOUTH MOUTH

Fletcher can quit now. I've got a new boy coming down. Catch him for a while.

**MONK**

(off)

Check. Okay, Fletch, go shower up.

**BEASLEY**

(walks back over and sits on the bench in the dugout)

You got the lineup for tonight?

**MOUTH**

Working on it.

**BEASLEY**

Who starts?

**MOUTH**

You mean pitcher? I just feel them one by one. Whoever's warm goes to the mound!

## 15. DIFFERENT ANGLE

As once again he puts his foot up on the parapet and stares out at the field. He cups his mouth again.

**MOUTH**

Chavez, stop already with the calisthenics!

## 16. MED. GROUP SHOT

As the four men stop the jumping up and down and just stand there disconsolately as Chavez thumbs them off the field.

## 17. FULL SHOT THE DUGOUT

As Mouth takes out a handkerchief and wipes his face then takes a step out of the dugout over to the try-out sign, looks at it then gives it a vicious boot, knocking it over. He turns and goes back into the dugout, puts his head against a post, closes his eyes. Camera pulls back until we see the cherubic, Dickenslike personage of Dr. Stillman, a tiny, white-haired, gentle-faced little man with fluttery eyes and hands. He comes up behind Mouth and clears his throat. Beasley turns to stare at him.

**STILLMAN**

(plucks at Mouth's sleeve)

Mr. McGarry?

**MOUTH**

(turns to look at him, screws up his face in distaste)

All right! What's the gag? What about it, Grandpa? Did this mutton head put you up to it?

(then to Beasley)

This is the pitcher, huh? Big joke. Yok. Yok. Yok. Big joke.

**STILLMAN**

Oh, I'm not the pitcher—but I've thrown baseballs in my time. Of course, that was before the war.

**MOUTH**

Yeah? Which war? The Civil War? You don't look old enough to have spent the winter at Valley Forge.

(then he glares at him intently)

Come to think of it—it was it really as cold as they say?

**STILLMAN**

(laughs gently)

Here's Casey now.

Mouth turns and looks over the parapet of the dugout toward the field. There, ambling along, is a jugged, blank-faced, incredibly inept looking young man: Casey.

## 18. MED. CLOSE SHOT A BATTER

As he suddenly lifts a pop fly over the infield.

## 19. LONG ANGLE SHOT LOOKING UP AT BALL

## 20-22. SEVERAL SHOTS OF MOUTH, STILLMAN, AND CASEY

Looking up at the ball as it starts to descend.

## 23. DIFFERENT ANGLE CASEY

As the ball lands on the top of his head and bounces back high into the air. Casey continues to walk toward Mouth without so much as a double take.

## 24. CLOSE SHOT MOUTH

Reacting with absolute disdain, disgust, and misery.

## 25. EXT. STADIUM DAY MED. SHOT THE DUGOUT

Casey stands blank-faced in between Stillman and Mouth.

**STILLMAN**

This is Mr. McGarry, Casey. He's the manager of the Zephyrs.

Casey suddenly sticks out his left hand.

**STILLMAN**

Your right hand, Casey, your right hand.

Like a toy soldier, Casey's left hand drops



and his right hand comes up as if on a swivel. Mouth grips his hand, reacts in pain, as he can't retract his own hand.

FADE TO BLACK:

OPENING BILLBOARD  
FIRST COMMERCIAL

FADE IN:

26. MED. SHOT  
EXT. STADIUM DUGOUT

Casey stands still, gripping Mouth's hand.  
STILLMAN

You can let go now, Casey.  
Casey lets Mouth's hand go. Mouth rubs his hand to restore circulation.

MOUTH

(pointing toward the field)

You see that guy with the great big mitt on? He's what's known as a catcher. His name is Monk. Throw a few to him.

CASEY

Thanks very much, Mr. McGarry.  
He starts to clamber out of the dugout followed by Stillman and the two men stand watching him.

27. LONG ANGLE SHOT  
LOOKING AT CASEY

Approaching the catcher.

28. TWO SHOT  
STILLMAN AND MOUTH  
MOUTH

You his father?

STILLMAN

Casey's? Oh, no. He has no father. I guess you'd call me his ... well, kind of creator.

MOUTH

(absolutely deadpan)

That a fact? How old is he?

STILLMAN

How old is he?

(a pause)

Well ... that's a little difficult to say.

MOUTH

(with a "see the kind of idiocy

I have to put with" look)

That's a little difficult to say.

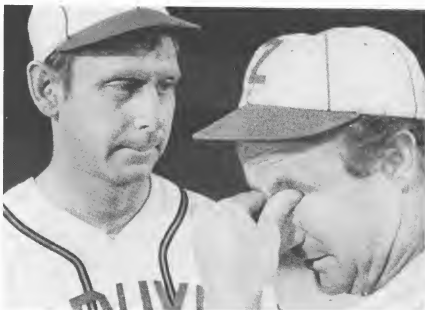
STILLMAN

(hurriedly again)

What I mean is it's hard to be chronological when discussing Casey's age because he's only been in existence for three weeks. What I mean is—he has the physique and mind of roughly a twenty-two year old but in terms of how long he's been here—the answer to that would be three weeks.

29. DIFFERENT ANGLE  
STILLMAN AND MOUTH

Mouth looks at him oddly



MOUTH

Would you mind going over that again?

STILLMAN

It's really not too difficult. You see, I made Casey. I built him.

(and then with a big, beatific smile)

Casey's a robot.

30. CLOSE SHOT MOUTH

He looks a little tilt at the old man, reaches over and pats him on the cheek.

MOUTH

Well, that's swell. There ain't too many left-handed robots in the league.

31. TRACK SHOT WITH HIM

As he walks a few feet toward the base path, hands in his hip pockets. Dr. Stillman scurries alongside him.

32. TWO SHOT  
MOUTH AND STILLMAN

We're looking at them from third base so that behind them we can see both Casey pitching and the batter at the plate. Casey whips the ball in with incredible speed.

STILLMAN

(smiling)

That's his fast ball.

Now Casey winds up and throws a curve which breaks at almost a forty-five degree angle from the plate.

STILLMAN

(smiling)

His curve.

Now Casey winds up and throws a ball which seems to hang in mid-air, shoots up and down, then burns into the plate.

STILLMAN

(a little blankly)

I don't know that one.

33. CLOSE SHOT MOUTH

His eyes bug out as suddenly the scene in front of his eyes focuses into reality, and

he realizes he's looking at an incredible pitcher.

34. LONG SHOT THE PLATE

The ball has just come in, seems to stop in mid-air, swerves left and right, then speeds like an express train into Monk's mitt. The catcher holds up his hand at Casey, takes off his mask, stands there for a moment, scratches his head, then walks toward the camera and Mouth.

MONK

You see him? That kid? He picks up where Feller left off. He's got a curve, hook, knuckler, slider, and a fast ball that almost went through my palm. He's got control like he uses radar. This is the best pitcher I ever caught in my life.

He walks off, shaking his head, and the camera stays on Mouth who keeps staring at Casey.

35. MED. LONG SHOT  
THE CATCHER

I swear ... I never seen anything like it. He's fantastic. He pitches like nothing human!

36. CLOSE SHOT MOUTH

As he reacts to this last line. He slowly turns to look toward Stillman.

37. PAN SHOT OVER TO  
STILLMAN

Who smiles at him knowingly.

38. TWO SHOT  
MOUTH AND STILLMAN

Mouth is excited beyond words, but deliberately and desperately stifles this excitement as he walks with what he hopes is an air of total nonchalance toward Stillman. His fingers shake as he lights a cigar with his cigarette lighter—then

# The Mighty Casey

throws the lighter over his shoulder like a match.

MOUTH

Well, he's rough, Gramps. He's plenty rough. But ... Well ... we might give him a try.

STILLMAN

He's a robot, you know.

MOUTH

Don't say that!

(softly)

Don't ever say the word R-O-B-O-T-T.

(he pinches the old man's cheek)

We'll just keep that one in the family here.

Casey walks over, enters the frame. Mouth turns to him, looks him up and down. Then once again, very cagey:

MOUTH

You might have a little potential there, Casey. Like I told Dr. Stillman ... you're awful rough ... but I think we could maybe give you a try. I like to help young ballplayers ... Now you go into the locker room and change your clothes.

(then to Stillman)

He wears clothes, don't he?

STILLMAN

By all means.

MOUTH

Then you go and change your clothes and come back and we'll discuss a little contract, just the three of us.

(then taking a deliberate slow drag on the cigar, he turns his back)

Go ahead ... aah ... what's your name—Casey. I'll see you later.

He stands there looking like a rocket ready to take off as Stillman and Casey move across the field, away from him. Then surreptitiously he stares at them over his shoulder to make sure they're out of earshot.

## 39. DIFFERENT ANGLE MOUTH

As he sprints toward the dugout, falling down the steps in a welter of bats and buckets, grabs the phone, screams into it:

MOUTH

General manager's office. McGarry. Draw up a contract. The only thing that stands between us and a pennant is if this guy's battery goes dead or he rusts in the rain.

(a pause)

Never mind what I mean. Draw up the contract.

He slowly replaces the receiver, then slowly turns to look across the field.

## 40. LONG SHOT STILLMAN AND CASEY

As they disappear.

## 41. CLOSE SHOT MOUTH

As he turns and stares toward the empty flagpole.

## 42. CLOSE SHOT FLAGPOLE [POST-PRODUCTION]

As a pennant flutters in the breeze. It reads WORLD CHAMPIONS. Whip pan back to Mouth who closes his eyes and lets his face relax into a dreamy smile.

FADE TO BLACK

END ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

FADE ON:

## 43. INT. DRESSING ROOM FULL SHOT THE ROOM

The players are just getting ready to go out on the field. Pan shot down one of the benches as Casey has been seen just putting on a pair of spikes. Monk the catcher is alongside of him. He looks over.

MONK

You got the signals down now, Casey?

CASEY

Yes.

MOUTH

(walking over toward them)

Casey—

(then he takes out a pill and plops it into his mouth)

Above all—don't be nervous!

CASEY

(puzzled)

Nervous?

STILLMAN

(coming up alongside from the other direction, patiently)

Ill at ease, Casey. As if one of your electrodes were—

MOUTH

(loudly, drowning him out)

You know, "nervous," Casey! Like as if it's two out in the ninth, you're one up and you're pitchin' against Joe DiMaggio and he comes up to the plate lookin' intent!

CASEY

(dead pan)

That wouldn't make me nervous. I don't know anybody named Joe DiMaggio.

MONK

(seriously to Mouth)

He don't know anybody named Joe DiMaggio.

MOUTH

(loudly)

I heard 'im! I heard 'im!

(then he turns to the rest of the players)

Awright, you guys, let's get goin! Monk pushes Casey out the door and follows him out. Mouth is left alone with Stillman in the room.

## 44. TWO SHOT

Stillman plucks at Mouth's sleeve.

STILLMAN

Mr. McGarry.

He points down to his feet, Mouth sheepishly lifts his leg out of the bucket, takes out a bottle of pills again, pops two of them in his mouth and gulps them down, points apologetically to his stomach.

MOUTH

Oh, I'd love to knock over those Giants! But for that matter, I'd like to knock off the Phillies and the Cards, too. Or the Braves or Cincinnati.

(and then a little forlornly)

Or the Hanksville Bullets—they beat us eleven to nothing in spring training.

STILLMAN

(smiles)

I think Casey will come through for you, Mr. McGarry.

MOUTH

(looks at him intently)

What have you got ridin' on this? What's your percentage?

STILLMAN

You mean with Casey? Just scientific is all. Purely experimental. I think that Casey is a superman of a sort and I'd like that proven. Once I built a home economist. Marvelous cook. I gained forty-six pounds before I had to dismount her. Now with Casey's skills—I realized with his strength and accuracy he'd be a baseball pitcher and in order to prove my point I had to have him pitch in competition. Also as an acid test have him pitch with absolutely the worst ball team I could find.

MOUTH

(dead pan)

That's very nice of you, Dr. Stillman. I appreciate it.

## 45. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT UMPIRE

As he screams.

UMPIRE

Play ball!

CUT TO:

## 46. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING DOWN ON CASEY

As the infield whips the ball around and finally a second baseman carries it over to him, rubs up the ball, and hands it to him. Casey turns, facing the plate, gets his signal, winds up, and let's fly.

CUT TO:

#### 47. BATTER

As he swings around three hundred and sixty degrees and falls on his diff. The Umpire gives him the right hand.

UMPIRE

Ste—rike one!

DISSOLVE TO:

#### 48. MONTAGE

Casey pitching, batters striking out. Over this we super the headlines. ZEPHYR ROOKIE PITCHES THREE SHUTOUTS IN A ROW; CASEY FANS EIGHTEEN TO WIN NINTH IN A ROW; ZEPHYRS ZOOM TO FOURTH PLACE AS CASEY PITCHES NUMBER FOURTEEN; THREE NO-HITTERS FOR THE MIGHTY CASEY AS ZEPHYRS MOVE INTO FIRST. Each of these headlines build on the other, each progressively darker, bigger, blacker, and then suddenly one large headline obliterates them all, zooming into the screen. It reads, CASEY BEANED, IN HOSPITAL FOR EXAM! This headline seems to melt away as if corroded by tears.

DISSOLVE TO:

#### 49. INT. HOSPITAL ROOM DAY EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE AN EYE

As seen through the hole in a doctor's lamp. Pull back for shot of Casey's face and above it the hovering face of a doctor in the middle of an examination. Pull back for shot of the room. Beasley stands there looking much sicker than Casey and Mouth McGarry alongside looks as if the sheet should already have covered him. Dr. Stillman stands quietly in the corner of the room.

DOCTOR

(straightens up, rubs his jaw reflectively)

No fracture. No concussion. Reflexes seem normal.

(he starts to put away his equipment in the bag)

I think you're going to be all right, Mr. Casey.

BEASLEY

(exhaling with a sound that sweeps the room like the north wind)

I can breathe again.

MOUTH

All I could think of was ... there goes Casey. There goes the pennant. There goes the series.

(a pause as he shakes his head)

There goes my career!



#### 50. MED. CLOSE SHOT DOCTOR

As he picks up Casey's wrist to feel for the pulse.

DOCTOR

Yes, Mr. Casey, I think you're in good shape here. Though when I heard how the ball hit you I wondered to myself how—

#### 51. CLOSE SHOT DOCTOR'S FACE

As he reacts.

#### 52. CLOSE SHOT HIS FUMBLING FINGERS

As he again tries to find a pulse.

#### 53. PROFILE SHOT CASEY IN BED

As the Doctor leans over to try to listen to his heart.

#### 54. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING UP AT DOCTOR

As his eyes go wide and he takes a stumbling half step away from the bed.

MOUTH

What's the matter? What's wrong?

DOCTOR

(takes out a handkerchief and wipes his face)

There's nothing wrong. Not a thing wrong. Everything's fine. It's just that—

BEASLEY

Just that what?

DOCTOR

(points a shaking finger at Casey)

This ... this man doesn't have any pulse. No heart beat. This man ... this man isn't alive.

#### 55. CLOSE SHOT STILLMAN

As he walks quietly over to Mouth.

STILLMAN

Mr. McGarry, it'll have to come out now.

BEASLEY

(looks at the two of them)

What's this all about, Mouth? What are you trying to pull off?

MOUTH

(turns to him, sick)

Beasley ... you ain't gonna like this. But it was Casey or it was nothing.

(he turns toward the figure on the bed)

What a pitcher!

(then he looks back toward Beasley)

And he was the only baseball player I ever managed who didn't eat nothing!

STILLMAN

(clears his throat and walks over to the Doctor)

Doctor, I think you should know this before you go any further. He doesn't have any pulse or any heart beat ... because he doesn't have any heart. He's a robot.

#### 56. CLOSE SHOT DOCTOR

As he whirls around to face Stillman.

DOCTOR

A what?

#### 57. MED. SHOT ROOM

STILLMAN

That's right. A robot.

DOCTOR

You sure?

STILLMAN

Oh, by all means. I built him.

DOCTOR

And he's been pitching for the Hoboken Zephyrs? Under the circumstances, I'm afraid I must notify the baseball commissioner!

# The Mighty Casey

MOUTH

(walking over to Casey's bed)  
Casey, would you move over?

DISSOLVE TO:

## 58. INT. HOSPITAL ROOM FULL SHOT THE ROOM

The commissioner of baseball stands in the middle exchanging wild shouts with Beasley and McGary and finally holds up his hands and shouts.

COMMISSIONER

Awright! Knock it off. He is suspended. That is the final decision. He's a robot!

MOUTH

So he's a robot?

COMMISSIONER

Article six, section two, the Baseball Code. I quote. "A team should consist of nine men." End of quote. Men, understand? Not robots.

BEASLEY

Commissioner, to all intent and purposes—he is human. Casey, talk to him. Tell him about yourself.

CASEY

(hesitantly)

What ... what should I say?

MOUTH

(excitedly)

See? He talks as good as me. And he's a whole lot smarter than most of the muttonheads I got on my ball team.

COMMISSIONER

He is not human!

BEASLEY

(desperately)

How human do you want him? He's got arms, legs, a face. He talks—

COMMISSIONER

(shouting back at him)

And no heart! He doesn't even own a heart. How could he be human without a heart?

MOUTH

Beasley doesn't have a heart neither—and he owns forty percent of the club.

COMMISSIONER

That's it, gentlemen. He doesn't have a heart. That means he isn't human and that's a clear violation of the Baseball Code. And therefore he doesn't play.

He turns and starts for the door.

STILLMAN

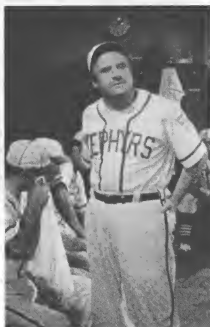
(rises from alongside  
Casey's bed)

Mr. Commissioner—

Commissioner stops and turns.

STILLMAN

Supposing we gave him a heart? If that essentially is the only thing that makes



him different from the norm—I think I could operate and supply him with a mechanical heart!

There's a wild reaction to this.

COMMISSIONER

(very, very thoughtfully)

Well this is ... this is irregular.

(he looks toward the Doctor)

If he were to be given a heart ... would you classify him as—what I mean is would you call him a—

DOCTOR

He had me fooled even without one.

COMMISSIONER

(looks from face to face)

All right. With a heart I'll give him a temporary okay until the League meeting in October. Then we'll have to take it up. The other clubs are gonna scream bloody murder.

(then biting his lip)

I can just see Durocher now!

BEASLEY

(his face suffused in a  
giant smile)

Then it's all settled. Casey gets a heart and the accreditation as being human and the Hoboken Zephyrs—

(he turns to Mouth  
benevolently)

Take it Mouthy—

MOUTH

The Hoboken Zephyrs win the pennant for the first time in twenty-three years!

DISSOLVE TO:

## 59. INT. DRESSING ROOM

The room is in absolute silence as we take a pan shot across the benches. The players are in uniform standing around silently. We hear Beasley's voice on the telephone and finally the camera reaches him as he leans against the wall, his face and voice intense, holding the receiver close to his ear.

BEASLEY

Yeah. Yeah. Well, thank you very much, operator.

He puts the phone down, looks across at Mouth and the other players who stare at him expectantly.

MOUTH

Well? How is he?

BEASLEY

I don't know. The operator can't get an answer at Stillman's house.

MONK

Maybe he's right in the middle of the operation.

MOUTH

(whirls around to him, glaring)

So he's in the middle of the operation. Whatsa matter he can't use one hand to pick up a phone?

(he looks at the clock on the

wall then juts out his face

fiercely toward the players, his

eyes scanning the bench)

We can't wait no longer. I got to turn in a battery. Corrigan, you'll pitch tonight. And the rest of you guys ...

(he sticks his hands in his back

pocket and paces back and

forth in front of them

dramatically)

Now listen, you guys. That's the enemy out there.

(he points toward the door)

That's the New York Giants.

(he says it like the words were

synonymous with a social

disease)

And while we're out there playing tonight a big fellow named Casey is lying on a table struggling to stay alive. And I know—I know that his last words before the knife went into his chest were ... go out there, Zephyrs, and win one for the big guy.

Pan shot down the faces of the other players as they look at him grimly. Monk, the big catcher, wipes his eyes with the back of his hand. The camera moves back toward Mouth as he begins to talk again. The camera is on his back as he faces the players. At the same time the door opens and Casey enters with Dr. Stillman. Casey

# The Mighty Casey

starts to say something to one of the players. The player shushes him and points to Mouth. Mouth again begins to pace back and forth.

## MOUTH

I'm gonna tell you something, guys.  
From now on—  
(he sniffs)

From now on there's gonna be a ghost in the dugout. Every time you pick up a bat look over to where Casey used to sit because he's gonna be there in spirit rooting for us, cheerin' for us, yellin', "Go, Zephyrs, go!"

(now he takes another step to the side and in doing so looks directly at Casey who is standing there smiling at him.

Mouth nods perfunctorily at him without missing a beat)

Hello there, Casey.

(then he turns back to the men)

And I'm gonna tell you somethin' else about that big guy. This fella has heart. Not a real heart, maybe, but this fella who's lying there with a big hole in his chest—

He suddenly stops dead, his eyes go wide open and he turns to look at Casey, his mouth open in a perfect O. He's immediately knocked aside by a rushing of players who trample over him on their way to shake Casey's hand. He starts to fight his way over to the big man himself, pulling players to the side and shouting.

## MOUTH

All right, knock it off. Let's have quiet. Quiet! Quiet!

By this time he's pushed his way to directly in front of Casey and Stillman.

## 60. GROUP SHOT THE THREE OF THEM

### MOUTH

Well?

### STILLMAN

(with a smile)

Go ahead, Casey. Tell him.

### CASEY

(with a broad smile, his face lit up by it)

Listen, Mr. McGarry.

He points his thumb at his chest and Mouth puts his ear there. We can hear a steady tick, tick, tick.

### MOUTH

(delightedly)

You got a heart!

There's a delighted chorus of exclamations and comments from the players.

### STILLMAN

And look at the smile. That's the one thing I couldn't get him to do—smile.



## CASEY

(nods happily)

Yep. It's wonderful. It's just wonderful. Now I feel ... I feel ... like togetherness!

## BEASLEY

(shouts)

Then let's go, team. Casey stars to-night! The new Casey!

With a roar of excitement the players file out of the room, Casey in their midst, followed by Mouth, Beasley, and little Dr. Stillman.

DISSOLVE TO:

## 61. EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND NIGHT MED. CLOSE SHOT CASEY ON THE MOUND

Just finishing warming up.

## UMPIRE'S VOICE

(off)

Play ball!

CUT TO:

## 62. MED. CLOSE SHOT DUGOUT

As Mouth stands there smiling. He nods happily to Beasley. Mouth rubs his hands together in an absolute frenzy of joy.

## 63. MED. CLOSE SHOT CASEY ON THE MOUND

Looking for the first signal. He nods, smiles.

CUT TO:

## 64. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING TOWARD THE BATTER

Who stands there, his bat poised.

CUT TO:

## 65. MED. CLOSE SHOT CASEY

As he winds up and lets the ball go. There's a sharp crack of the bat. Casey's eyes go skyward.

CUT TO:

## 66. FULL SHOT DUGOUT

As all of the men are on their feet looking off in the distance at center field.

CUT TO:

## 67. SHOT OF SCOREBOARD

As a big ONE goes up in front of the New York Giants.

DISSOLVE TO:

## 68. SERIES OF MONTAGES

Casey pitching, batters hitting, interspersed with shots of the scoreboard as the Giants pile up runs.

DISSOLVE TO:

## 69. INT. DRESSING ROOM NIGHT

A couple of ball players are just putting their coats on, two others are just leaving. The room is empty save for Stillman and Casey, the latter has just put on his pants and has a towel draped over his shoulders. Mouth enters, looks from one to the other glaring.

## MOUTH

Well? Well? One minute he's three Bob Fellers—the next minute he's a tanker with nothing! All right; you want to tell me, Casey? Want to explain? You might start by telling me how one man can throw nine pitched balls and give up four singles, two doubles, a triple, and two home runs.

## STILLMAN

(looks toward Casey softly)

Shall I tell him?

Casey nods.

## STILLMAN

(simply)

Casey has a heart.

## MOUTH

(fuming)

So? Casey has a heart!

## CASEY

The thing is, Mr. McGarry ... I just

couldn't strike out those poor fellas. I didn't have it in me to do that ... to hurt their feelings. I felt ... I felt compassion.

He looks toward Stillman for a verification.

STILLMAN

(nodding)

That's what he's got--compassion.

See how he smiles?

Casey grins obediently and happily and Stillman returns the smile.

STILLMAN

Give a person a heart, Mr. McGarry, particularly someone like Casey who hasn't been around long enough to understand things like competitiveness or drive or ego.

CASEY

(smiling)

I'm sorry Mr. McGarry. I just can't hurt fellas' careers. Dr. Stillman thinks I should go into social work. I'd like to help people.

MOUTH

That's what happens to you? Shall I tell you what happens to me? I go back to a baseball organization whose farm system consists of one silo and a McCormick reaper. The only thing we get

sent up to us in the spring is a wheat crop.

Mouth turns almost as if in a trance, stops by the door, rubs his jaw reflectively, then he very slowly turns to look across at Stillman. First he nods with his head motioning him over, then he wiggles a forefinger at him. Stillman smiles.

STILLMAN

Excuse me, Casey.

CUT TO:

#### 70. EXT. EMPTY BASEBALL

##### STADIUM LONG ANGLE SHOT

Looking down at Mouth McGarry walking across the infield with Dr. Stillman in tow.

#### 71. CLOSER ANGLE

We can see McGarry making motions with his hands suggesting curves, hooks, and sliders; then another series of motions indicating gradations of heights of baseball players.

#### 72. LONG ANGLE SHOT

As the two of them disappear into the empty outfield.

DISSOLVE TO:

#### 73. FULL SHOT

##### THE EMPTY STADIUM

Exactly as in the beginning.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Once upon a time there was a major league baseball team called the Hoboken Zephyrs, who during the last year of their existence wound up in last place and shortly thereafter wound up in oblivion. There is a rumor ... unsubstantiated of course ... that a manager named McGarry took them to the West Coast and wound up with a pennant and a world championship not long after their arrival. This team had a pretty fair pitching staff, several fellas named Drysdale, Koufax, and Sherry ...

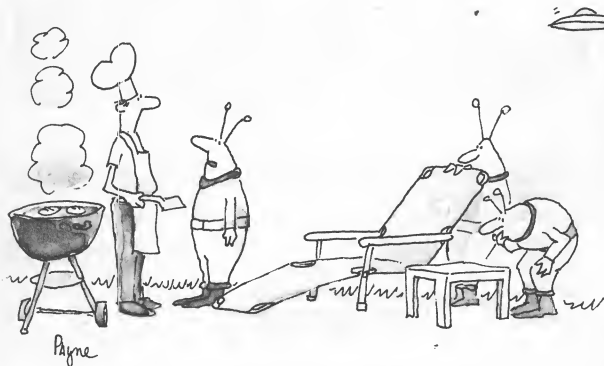
(a pause)

And if you are interested as to where these gentlemen came from, you might check under "B" for baseball ... in The Twilight Zone.

The camera now pans up past empty stadium into the sky.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END



We're from an advanced civilization that has harnessed intergalactic space travel, but you guys are light years ahead of us in lawn furniture.

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